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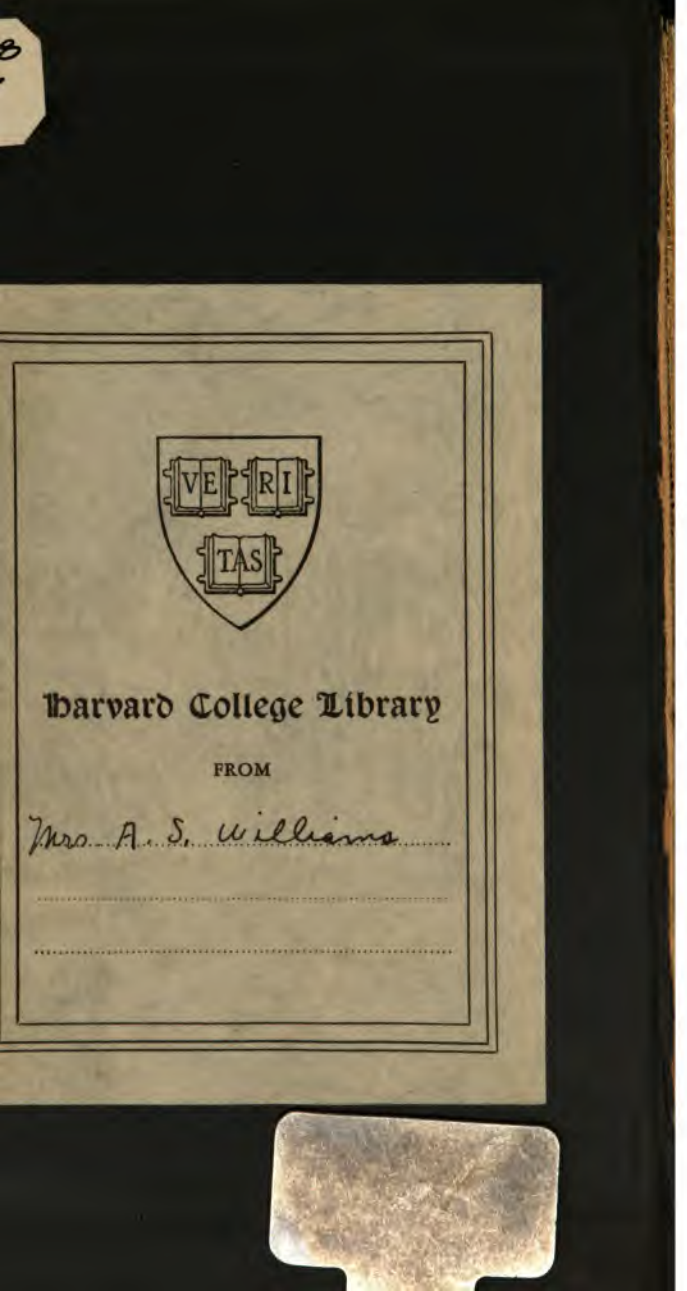
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COLLOQUIA CRUCIS

A SEQUEL TO

'TWO FRIENDS'



Dora Greenwell

COLLOQUIA CRUCIS

A SEQUEL TO

'TWO FRIENDS'

BY

DORA GREENWELL.

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'Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

'But He was wounded for our trangressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with the lividness of His stripes we are healed.'

'Many soul-longings
Have I had in my day,
Now the hope of my life
Is that tree of Triumph
Ever to turn to;
I alone, oftener
Than all men soever
Magnifying its majesty.
Mighty my will is
To cleave to the Crucified;
My claim for shelter
Is, right to the Rood.'

CAEDMON'S CROSS-LAY.

CHAPTER I.

THE summer was over, the glorious summer of 186—, a summer like none that had gone before, or that would follow after it,—the very revel of nature, when she seemed to reach a fulness, at which, in ordinary seasons, she can only aim. In that summer's long warmth and radiance there had been nothing scant or niggard; none of that chill reluctance so native to our variable climate, which implies that to-morrow may hesitate to confirm the blessing to-day has brought us. Day after day, week after week, followed on in clear unbroken splendour, till the earth was steeped in blessedness, and a sense

of wonder and expectancy stole across the spirit, as if some still enchanted region were about to open upon it suddenly, and the soul would quickly break into some yet unvisited region of super-sensual, yet actual joy. I felt as one who sleeping with open windows near some swift-rushing and narrow stream wakens up in the warm dusk gloom of the summer midnight to hear the nightingales singing in the woods on its hither shore.

All things seemed to hint at some yet unimagined felicity; the light leaves beckoned in their waving, the wild-rose leaned forward from the hedgerow with a whisper in its glowing heart, as if it strove to communicate through the bliss of its breath and hue some secret deeply longed for by the soul, which it needed but to hear to be made happy for ever. How sweet were the green leaves that summer! how kind their aspect to the wayfarer! all things near were friendly, and all that were distant alluring; each little byway, each narrow field-path, seemed like a separate track into a region of clear and sunny bliss, into the midst of which the donkey-cart disappearing round an angle of the road might be at this very

moment driving. A world of golden possibilities seemed opening, a world in which familiar things looked wonderful, and the wonderful might easily become familiar. The senses baptized the soul with so deep and pure a baptism, that it expanded and blessed them in return; it felt strong and eager, *able to receive miracles, though it could not as yet perform them.* And I felt that at moments like these, no goodly sight, however unwonted—the flash of a knight's armour through the greenwood, or the fair vision of nymph or Naiad evanishing by stream or fountain,—would have seemed startling, for life itself stood upon the threshold of enchantment. Nature was transfigured, idealized simply through being more full and rich. She flung forth her sign-manual of perfection, writ large and liberally, with a free and careless hand. The woods this year were thicker, their shade deeper, the corn more golden, the very berries of an intenser scarlet than they had ever been before, yet around all that was so vivid in colour, so defined in outline, there was a warm suffusion of atmosphere that allowed of nothing hard or literal. Over all things, even at noon-day, would some-

times hang a soft and sunny haze, transparent as the veil that wraps the limbs of a goddess, in and out of which the trees would seem to step at pleasure, while through it the broad meadows by the river, and the gleaming upland pastures beyond, showed fair as the Delectable Fields of the Pilgrim's dream.

The birds this year sang into the depth of summer, and in the very heart of autumn the rose still bloomed, as if in some blessed conspiracy all things that were sweet and lovely had agreed to wait for each other, as friends will do who press forward or loiter, so as to win the surer meeting on their way. One could not but recall the deep prophetic saying, 'Behold, the sower shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.'

And it was in the autumn of this summer, the short splendid autumn which followed so quickly upon its long glories, kindling them into one crowning flash of sacrificial ecstasy, full of light and flame and odour, that Philip and I were re-united once more. Some business connected with his mission had brought him over to England, and after a

separation of five years, autumn, with which I had ever associated our intercourse, found us together once again. 'The earth was at rest and satisfied.' Oftentimes at noon-day or at eve a subtle momentary light stole forth that seemed like a token of intimate recognition from nature's secret soul; her soul, which, like that of man, is at ordinary times folded and guarded in dumb impenetrable reserve. Once, I remember, Philip and I lighted suddenly upon a moment, or rather say an hour, such as cannot come again. The wood in which we were walking opened out its very heart, and took us within it, as a friend will sometimes do who could never be the same again, never so tender or so confiding, even if he were to try. In the deep stillness and softness of all around us, in the incomparable splendour of the evening, there was something that seemed to bring us into the immediate presence of God. The wood was all our own; no bird sang from out the thicket, the broad river was so shallow as to be almost silent; even a flower, I thought, would have broken the utterly sylvan charm, but not one bloomed beside our path. It was a world of green silence and of

golden sunlight, sunlight trickling through the thick leaves, glittering upon the river, gleaming on the crags above us, while the trees stood forth in clear rounded masses, robed, not in the dark gloom of summer, but in hues which even in July were warm and burnished, as if the woods had ripened along with the corn.

We spoke of many things, and were sometimes silent, overcome by the spell to which all around us ministered; but, speaking or silent, our inward communion went on unceasingly, for Philip and I were still as we had ever been, *friends*, and as such, able not only to understand, but oftentimes even to interpret, each other's half-expressed meaning, reading out of each other's souls by the glow which each spirit cast upon the other, as those do who sit and read by the warm hearth-light out of the same book.

And Philip was still, as in the times of old, Truth's free, fearless lover. His eye was still clear and searching, his foot as firmly planted upon earth's fruitful and familiar soil as it had ever been, yet the bold flight of his thoughts seemed now to bear him to a far higher level than he had

occupied in the days I loved to look back to, and to knit up with our present intercourse. He seemed now to take in a far wider horizon,—*to see more both of earth and heaven.* More especially in all that regards Man's relations with the Divine, I found he had grown free and daring; disdainful, in questions bearing upon life's deeper and more intricate problems, of all that is timid and apologetic, ready to give every acknowledged fact its due weight and value. And here it was that my own spirit, naturally burdened and timid, was able to meet his with a strange alacrity. My life during the five years of our separation, partly from want of health, and partly from outward circumstances of a peculiarly repressive character, had been singularly self-centred. In the dearth of many personal interests, in the decay of many natural hopes, in the silence and solitude of a darkened chamber, while many flowers had withered, others had come into strange and sudden bloom. And some of these, it is possible, were the richer in hue and odour from their having won their exuberant growth under circumstances akin to those under which certain floral wonders of the tropics attain

their splendour; shut in from air and light, under the dark fervid gloom of the overshadowing forest. My life had been so assailed by the sharp realities of pain, my heart and my senses so wooed and haunted by visions of beauty, that it seemed to me as if I had learnt *all* that either had to reveal. Nay, more: these two had become to me intertwined and inseparable; pain passed into all I looked upon or listened to; it lent an added thrill to music, a tinge to the rose's inmost leaf, while the ever haunting sense of beauty, freedom, and delight, of all things fair, desired, and unpossessed, gave a soul-ache to pain itself, far keener than it would else have known.

Yet great as had been the sum for which it had attained this freedom, *my soul was at last free.* A thick curtain had been drawn between me and the outward world, deadening to me its loud and secular jarrings: its voice of harsh contradiction was silent, so also was its agitated murmur of desire, and hope, and eager impulse; silent too the quick suggestions of vanity, the oft recurring whisper of the small and great ambitions that make up life. Or if these were still heard by me,

they were unheeded as is the roar and grinding of wheels in the street below by one who is watching by a death-bed. But high and clear above earth's distracting murmur, like the deep swaying of a distant bell, had fallen a note that called to me from out of the very heart of God. It seemed not to belong to Time's hurrying voices, it did not even interpret them, and I knew that in spite of its clear presage of final peace. its solemn promise of perfect reconciliation, of infinite overcoming love, life's fret and fever would continue, its dull blank intervals return so long as life itself should last. Yet let the dry and withering wind sweep on, the chill mist droop and gather! I knew that beyond them lay a fair illumined world, warm with the richest glow of affection, and bright with the trophies of a long anticipated victory. Very precious to me was each gleam and indication that stole across my spirit, warning me of the nearness of this kingdom of which prophets and saints have testified, and in which poetry has ever found its home, the realm 'of good beyond the reach of sense, of excellence beyond the capacity of reason, which the mind

with hidden exultation rather surmiseth than conceiveth.'[1] It is something surely to have been in heaven, even for the space of half-an-hour, something to have touched the bright shore of measureless content, to have met the balm-fraught gale that blows from it, however swiftly borne thence by the strong o'er-mastering current.

And while, as I have said, much that was worldly had faded from my spirit, all that was human had drawn closer to it, had become, as eternal things had grown more real to me, more sweet and infinitely precious. The solemn realities of faith, the tender ineradicable instincts of humanity, could still appeal to my inmost being, could still awaken my very heart, and stir a fibre within it, which had grown unresponsive to all beside. And while the Mighty Cross had come into the foreground of my whole existence, the little flower, the first I had gathered in my childhood, still bloomed in peace beneath it, and seemed to give forth a deeper fragrance, to drink in a more intense life under the dark and terrible shadow—to

[1] Hooker.

be more delicately outlined, more richly coloured than it had been in the hazel coppice, where I had first seen it grow. *The cross which had brought God nearer had made man more dear.* It had become the unchanging centre of my thoughts, but these, as they revolved around it, had gradually, yet surely, formed for themselves an orbit widely diverging from the circle in which Christian consciousness is wont to move. The cross, as I looked at it more and more intently, became to me the revelation of a loving and a suffering God. I learnt to look upon the sacrifice of the death of Christ, not only as being the all-sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, *but also as the everlasting witness to God's sympathy with man.* The mystery of the Cross did not, it is true, *explain* any one of the enigmas connected with our mortal existence and destiny, but it linked itself in my spirit with them all. It was itself an enigma flung down by God alongside of the sorrowful problem of human life, the confession of Omnipotence itself to some stern reality of misery and wrong. 'One deep calleth to another.' Here, I thought, is the key to that open

secret which nature and humanity alike spread out before us, of loss and waste, of suffering even unto death, and of victory working through them all; here, the counterpart to the slow and often interrupted travail for ever going on among us, through which individuals, yea, even nations, perish, 'and the race is more and more.' And the deeper these thoughts sank within me, the more complete became my dissatisfaction with the shallow theories through which human thinkers have striven to bridge over contradictions which God has left unreconciled, and to reply to questions which He has been pleased to leave unanswered. That death of anguish which Scripture declares to us to be 'necessary,' though it does not explain wherein its dire necessity resides, convinced me that God was not content to throw, as moralists and theologians can do so easily, the whole weight and accountability of sin and suffering upon man, but was willing, if this burden might not as yet be removed, to share it with His poor, finite, heavily burdened creature. When I looked upon my agonized and dying God, and turned from that world-appealing sight, Christ crucified for us, to

look upon life's most perplexed and sorrowful contradictions, I was not met as in intercourse with my fellow-men by the cold platitudes that fall so lightly from the lips of those whose hearts have never known one real pang, nor whose lives one crushing blow. I was not told that all things were ordered for the best, nor assured that the overwhelming disparities of life were but apparent, but I was met from the eyes and brow of Him who was indeed acquainted with grief, by a look of solemn recognition, such as may pass between friends who have endured between them some strange and secret sorrow, *and are through it united in a bond that cannot be broken.* So that I had learnt to attach a broad and literal meaning to the words, 'My thoughts are not as your thoughts,' and to believe that human ingenuity is possibly never so little acceptable to the Almighty as when it sets itself to 'plead lies for God, and to argue deceitfully for Him.' I could not, too, but recall one ever-memorable instance in which the human heart, over-weighted with accumulated anguish, had dared to lift itself to Him who made it. I had heard Job plead with God as a man

might plead with his neighbour, I had listened to the terrific challenges in which the creature seemed as it were to arraign its Creator at the bar of eternal justice, truth, and love, and there to demand a hearing. And I had found it was Job of whom God said, '*He* hath spoken concerning me the thing that is right.' I had seen Job blessed, justified, *accepted* by his Maker, while his friends, the special pleaders for Omnipotence, were forgiven for his sake, and indebted to his priestly intercession for their pardon.

Also, when I turned to the Psalms and Prophets, I was greeted by a voice which seemed silent in the continually reiterated *culpa mea, maximâ culpa* of ordinary Christian prayer. I was met by a strain of bold and tender expostulation to which God himself seems to invite man, when He says, 'Come now, let us *reason* together.' I heard man address his Maker in language far indeed, far removed from the abjection of the books of devotion I had always used. I listened to words now of tender complaining, now of sorrowful and indignant pleading, to words such as on earth may pass between friends who deeply love, but do not as yet

wholly understand each other. Out of the heart of crushing perplexities I heard Jeremiah say, in words that on less hallowed lips would have been deemed profane, 'O Lord, *Thou* hast deceived me, and I was deceived.' I listened to the Psalmist's lowly and confiding voice moaning softly as the dove moans through the silent woods in summer, 'Thou tellest my flittings, put my tears into Thy bottle; are not these things noted in Thy book?' I heard him urge in accents that implied a close and long established intimacy, 'Lord, *Thou* knowest my groaning, and my desire is not hid from Thee.' I found the great apostle of the Gentiles, even while most vehemently proclaiming Christ as his sole ground of favour and of acceptance with God, testifying to his own deep inward sincerity as a thing of which he is well assured, and anticipating as part of the bliss of heaven, that he shall know God, even as he himself is known of Him. Yes, more: I found St. John referring to the human heart, the established rock of stumbling and stone of offence among theologians, as the ultimate standard of spiritual responsibility; God, he tells us, *who knoweth all*

things, is greater than our heart, implying that He alone is greater, and says that if our heart does not condemn us we may have confidence toward God. I found then that those among men who had known the most of God had the most deeply reverenced their own nature, and I felt it hard to be astonished, as I had sometimes been asked to be from the Christian pulpit, that God should concern Himself at all about so sinful, so poor, and abject a being as is man. I had learned rather to indorse the saying which the great Spanish dramatist puts into the mouth of his dying malefactor, and to believe that if earth had contained but *one* lost, guilty, wandering soul like his, Divine love would have come down from heaven to save it.

And through the consideration of these twofold mysteries, the life of man on earth, and the death of his God from heaven, I learnt to enter into the spirit of that deep saying with regard to Christ, 'It is because Jesus is a God of love that He is a man of sorrows,'[1] and to believe that it is the Divine only which can perfectly under-

[1] Faber.

stand, and can therefore thoroughly sympathize with, the Human. Whatever was good in our human nature, I felt to be so *because* it was divine, eternal, infinite, one with God's unchangeable nature. And while I thus mused, a fire within my soul kindled; distinctions and definitions that had long trammelled it and checked its free expansion fell off from it for ever, as the dry fibrous cordage of some parasitical plant might do, that had long wrapped itself about the soul, but had no root within it. What did it avail, I now asked myself, that theologians should distinguish between the moral attributes as these are exemplified in the divine and in the human nature? My heart told me '*there was but one kind of love*,'[1] and my reason assured me that if the love of God indeed differed from the love of man or woman, it differed only in being pure, unchanging, infinite,—*more simply and entirely love*. And more and more, through the same deep inward testimony, I was convinced that if justice, mercy, truth, and love were anything at all, *they were everything*, and that God must be true to

[1] Lacordaire.

the highest word He has yet spoken. In heaven above, as upon earth below, I learned to look upon those attributes as His truest manifestations; I sought for, I reverenced, their gleams and traces, whether they shone forth in immortal beauty from the face of my Redeemer, 'fairer than the children of men,' or shed a wandering ray within the dim darkened spirit of the savage and the outcast; I felt that as God is one, so is goodness one; I ceased to discriminate too curiously between natural virtues and evangelic graces. It was enough for me to know, upon an apostle's testimony, that *every* good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, and to His almighty heart, as to its natural home, I learned to trace all that was fair and excellent in earth and heaven, and to look for it chiefly *there*. My own heart told me that if man had no other friend, if he was the slave of sense, the sport of circumstance, too often the thrall of demons, he had still his God, infinite, tender, and searching in love as is the light to which. He compares himself, alone able to pity, because alone able to understand the being He

has framed and gifted so wondrously and fearfully. When I thought of Humanity and God, I recalled a scene which a friend had witnessed at Damascus, when sitting in a café thronged with well-dressed and influential citizens: a sudden noise drew general attention to the street, and a man was seen approaching, naked, emaciated (apparently from long fasting), his whole appearance to the last degree wild and neglected. My friend said he afterwards learned that this man frequently disappeared for weeks, and even months, together, and was lost, like the demoniacs of Scripture, in the wild desolate country which lies beyond the city. This strange being came suddenly into the café, where all made way for him; he walked, however, to the further end of the room, where an elderly man, evidently a person of high consideration, was seated. To him the poor stranger went up at once, sat down on the ground beside him, and laid his head upon his knee, with the satisfied assured look of one who has been long 'destitute, afflicted, and tormented,' but is now at rest. The appearance of the two men, my friend told me, offered a

strange contrast, but on the part of him who was sitting clothed, and in his right mind, there was no trace of shrinking or withdrawal from the advances of the naked maniac; they were met with tender benignity, *and without the expression of surprise;* room was made for him, and refreshments of various kinds were brought. He had, it was evident, *found his place.*

Now too, as my thoughts rested more and more on Him from whom all Fatherhood in heaven and earth is named, it would often appear to me, as regards the Second Person in the blessed Trinity, that His twofold work had been too little regarded by His general church under the aspect under which He first announced it when He arose and said: 'He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, *to comfort all who mourn.*' Yes, *all* who mourn, whether that mourning be for sin or for the strange inexplicable burden with which pain and sorrow overcharge so many a heart and life. Him too I learned to look upon as being in an especial manner the saviour of the body, its future restorer,

even now its healer. 'He himself bare our sicknesses.' Among the four Gospels that of St. Mark became my favourite, from the sudden direct manner in which it at once brings Christ into contact with a suffering world, and shows Him surrounded from morning until latest eve with the direst aspects of human despair and woe. I saw Him cast out devils, banish fever, cleanse leprosy, restore the withered hand. I heard Him establish a connexion between bodily suffering and sin, in the same remarkable words which testified to His power over the dark empire to which each belongs: 'Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?' My spirit hailed Him as a mighty deliverer, the restorer of man's spiritual heritage, the restorer, too, of those natural powers and faculties which are now imprisoned, distorted, and decayed. While He brought again the kingdom to Israel, and restored man's spiritual being to communion with its God, through Him, too, I felt that the 'son of the bondwoman would also become a great nation.' I foresaw that through His redeeming work man's physical existence

would become free and blessed, and the fulness of grace and the wealth of nature would one day meet and overspread the world in a mighty commingling stream.

And while many hearts were drawn to this Divine person, because they were persuaded that He was truly and fully man, and, as being such, able to enter into all that man feels, mine was attracted and bound to Him, because I was persuaded that He was truly and fully God. Where but in God Himself a Spirit, and the Father of Spirits, could I find a love like the light which is His chosen emblem, subtle and searching enough to penetrate every fold of my complicated nature, and to meet it at every point? Where but in His vast benignity was I to look for the tender indulgence which I found I needed, but elsewhere could not expect to meet? In my own nature I found a hindrance, in that of others I experienced a check. In all that was human I was encountered by a tendency either to excess, or to limitation, the hint of possible weariness, the presage of forefelt decay. God alone was sufficient for the spirit which He had created, sufficient for its tri-

viality as well as for its grandeur. Infinitely little, as well as infinitely great, 'Behold, He weigheth the dust in a balance, He taketh up the isles as a very small thing.' He, the great Father[1] of our Humanity, I found was also its Redeemer, whose love and whose pity had carried it 'even from the days of old.'

[1] Isaiah lxiii. 16.

CHAPTER II.

The men of old who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, remember to have heard from him, how in those times the Lord taught and said, 'Days will come when vines shall grow each ten thousand shoots, and to every shoot ten thousand branches, and to every tendril ten thousand clusters, and to every cluster ten thousand berries, and every berry shall yield twenty-five measures of wine. And if one of the Saints shall grasp at such a cluster, another will cry, I am a better cluster, take me, and through me praise the Lord. In like manner shall every grain of wheat produce ten thousand ears, and every ear ten thousand grains, and every grain ten thousand pounds of pure white meal, and the other fruits, seeds, and vegetables in like manner.' —*So quoted by* IRENÆUS *and confirmed by the testimony of* PAPIAS.

CHAPTER II.

AND when I spoke with Philip on this subject, it was to find that his spirit had gone far upon a kindred track. He too, I found, had learnt to look to Christ, not only as to the great sacrifice for sin, but as to the restorer of man's whole physical and moral structure,—Him through whom the waste places of old were to be rebuilt, the desolations of many generations reclaimed. He adhered so steadfastly to the fact of the soul's spiritual dependence on the work of Christ as to delight in all statements, however naked and literal, which brought the judicial aspect of that work into clear relief. He liked no sacred poem so well as that one in

which George Herbert says he intends at the Day of Judgment to thrust a New Testament into our Saviour's hands, and simply show Him, on its testimony,

'That all my sins were thine.'

Yet the Cross he so loved and clung to in its bare severity of outline seemed to have been framed, as old legends tell us it was, out of the Tree of Life which grew

'Fast in the Paradise of God,'

the tree yielding leaves of healing, and fruits of delight and of desire, fruits which, like the manna of Rabbinical tradition, imparted to each one that came to taste them the very flavour in which his soul most delighted! How often would Philip enlarge upon man's deep, ineradicable, and as yet but partially developed capacity for happiness, upon the instinct for delight which is so much a part of our nature as to make Pleasure, under one form or another, not only necessary towards our well-being but an actual condition of our being itself. He would sometimes draw my attention to the strange alacrity with which the

mind, under repressed and sorrowful circumstances, will draw to itself some small alleviation, will even *create* such out of the most adverse situations. Humanity, he would say, will never consent to be disinherited of joy; be it ever so cruelly robbed and defrauded, it will still put in its persistent claim to the happiness originally intended for it by God. A mind wrung off its centre by anguish, as was the poet Cowper's, will yet make itself something to love and take pleasure in—witness his interest in his hares, and the playful trifling, so sweet yet so evidently forced, of his letters. 'So natural,' said Philip, 'is it for man to be happy, that I believe it is hard for any one whose life has been habitually unhappy to love God as a child does its father, or to feel that He is love. Such a one has missed that sunshine of which Virgil speaks, 'the mother's smile upon his youth,' failing which the soul can never expand in its perfect flower-like bloom. I know too well that there are many persons on earth who have never drunk deeply at its cup of natural blessedness, some possibly who have scarcely tasted it; there are certain lives which, like plants in an unfriendly

clime and soil, have never been able to reveal the beauty of their nature, hearts in which all that is best and sweetest has been unmet and unfostered from without. I feel that such persons, when they are called upon to leave this world, do so with a sense of dying *unbaptized*, and with a want of a firm foot-hold upon heaven; the soul is unassured of love, and departs with a shivering uncertainty as to whether it may find the after-world any warmer or kinder than this has been! Joy,' continued Philip, with kindling eyes, 'is the spirit's blessed viaticum, energizing all its truest powers! One of our Saviour's last requests for His own, whom having loved He loved to the end, was that *His joy might remain in them, and that their joy might be full.*' Often would Philip draw my attention to a fact which had already become deeply significant to my own mind, the scope which Prophecy, especially that of Isaiah, gives to man's craving for natural delight. It is *beauty* which Isaiah promises, beauty in exchange for ashes; it is not mere sufficiency which he foretells for Christ's peaceable kingdom, but wealth, exuberance, feasts of fat things, of marrow, of

wine on the lees well refined. It is the rose with which the wilderness is to rejoice and blossom, the myrtle which is to succeed the thorn, plants merely fair, and sweet, and gracious, ministering only to delight. On this point Philip would grow eloquent, even to the point of disparaging things useful and profitable, making little account of the abundance of brass and iron, of the fir-tree and the box which grow together, and exalting the wine and oil far above the corn. Yet I well remember that his argument would culminate in this remark: 'We, for instance, would think it much that a lame man should be enabled to walk, a dumb man to speak; but observe, the lame man is to leap like a hart, the tongue of the dumb is to sing; in each province, nature, hitherto so cruelly restricted, has to pass at once into the form which allows of its most free and beautiful expansion, and life, under the beneficent sway of its true Lord, is to spread into its fullest bloom, and to give forth its rarest odour. Even now, while we yet await the coming of His kingdom, we may hear Christ say, "I am come that ye may have *life*, and that ye may have it more abundantly."'

'And yet,' I said, 'how often have you and I seemed to discern a principle of separation, even unto death, in Christianity? How clearly have we seemed to detect something, both in its theory and its practical working, which is hostile to the free and full development of nature—an antagonism to natural life and joy, which has never failed, in any deep and true revival of Christianity, to make itself felt under one form or other of Ascetism, so that, looking to the Earth as our great Mother, we may seem to hear Christ's voice address her from age to age in the words of that stern prophecy, "A sword shall go through thine own heart also."'

'True,' said Philip, 'and yet Christ still loves that great Mother, still recognises her awful claim upon Him even when He speaks austerely to her, and seems to repel her advances. His austerity is only that of Joseph making himself for a while strange unto his brethren, speaking roughly to them while his heart yearns towards them, and he weeps over them in his inner chamber. Christ, from the very quality of His nature, *must* be friendly to all that is in itself excellent, and to

all that is in a true sense natural. *He is one with nature* in so far as nature represents the original idea of God,[1] but is the world which we are warned *not* to love, the world which hated and crucified its God, the same world which Almighty goodness and love at first beholding pronounced to be very good—the work upon which, when it was finished, the Divine complacency rested, well content, as upon the Beloved Son in whom the Father was "well pleased"? It is well for us, as thinkers, to be clear on this point; well for us to be prepared to admit that *nature as it is* has declined from this original perfection, so as to see how it is that Christ has to lead us back to God—yes, and when we consider things more deeply, back to Nature herself—by ways that are devious and painful. If we would understand much that

[1] 'When we speak of the will of God,' says Nicole in his great work on Prayer, 'we must look to His eternal primeval order, that which God made and meant man for, righteousness, perfection, and bliss, an order which the course of human affairs continually contradicts and apparently defeats. God,' he adds, 'as we see in the case of sin, permits that which He hates;' so that, as Newman says, 'it is not to the mere connexion of events and circumstances we must look for the expression of God's will, but rather to what we know of His nature, as He has himself revealed it to us in the person and mind of His Son, *and in the moral nature of man made in His own image.*'

seems harsh and separative, both in the doctrines of the gospel and in the lives and sentiments of individual Christians, we must never forget that Christianity itself is a system of Divine reparation. The whole work of Christ is remedial. It is founded on the reality of man's sin and loss, and implies the fact of an actually existing perversion and disorganization so wide and searching, that its remedy, *to go deep enough to meet and conquer it*, must attack the very fountains of life itself. Yes,' said Philip solemnly, 'it must sometimes dry up those ever springing wells and fountains, so that each green herb around them withers,—must sometimes, as has so often been done in warfare, carry fire and sword even into a friendly territory, making it bare and desolate, so that the invading enemy when he comes shall find nothing whereupon to maintain his forces. There is a sadness in the history of every deep conversion to Christ, a foreseen pang of detachment, decay, and death, which has often made me recall a striking story which I have met with,[1] com-

[1] Told by Dr. John Brown, in *Horæ Subsecivæ*.

memorating the zeal of a French physician, who, having brought all the resources of his skill to bear upon a patient whose strength gave way under the rigour of the remedies employed, exclaimed in a sorrowful exultation, "*néanmoins il est mort guéri.*" Yet Christ's triumph, if a sorrowful one even unto death, is less gloomy than that of the physician, for it is the triumph of life over the very death to which it for a while becomes subject. It is the outburst of a spiritual energy which, through this very death, frees itself from bondage and corruption, *from all that gives death its power*, and rises into its true life. The writings of St. Paul, the Church's deepest teacher, are but one expanded commentary upon our Saviour's words, "Behold, I lay down my life that I may take it again." St. Paul rejoices in afflictions, in infirmities, in persecutions; he exults in bodily weakness, through which, he says implicitly, the strength of Christ lives. His desire is to know his Lord in the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be made conformable *to His death.* Even Paganism has deeply entered into the sense of needed purification, and of a moral deliverance only to be

attained through actual death, or through austerities that are its living image. Many of the Hindu legends bring out this conviction in strange and affecting forms, as in the old poem we have been lately reading, where one of the foes of heaven, a huge giant whom one of the "pious heroes" vanquishes, kisses his conqueror's hand, and in the agonies of death blesses him as his deliverer from a long and unwilling bondage to the dark powers of evil, a vassalage from which his death-wound has set him free for ever.'

Philip paused a moment, then resumed, 'And you will find that the deep conviction of man's need of deliverance from inherent moral evil, *to be obtained at whatever cost*, is what may be called, *par excellence*, the evangelic principle—is the root from which all Christian life springs. It found utterance once and for ever in that impassioned outburst of St. Paul's, when, in the agony of a long warfare between sense and spirit, he exclaimed, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and the experience of the Christian Church from age to age has been but the echo of his cry. Who shall deliver me from all, within me

and without me, that I find so strange, so hostile, so contradictory to that which even of myself is self-approved as best and purest, yet from which I continually err.'

'Natural religion,' I said musingly, 'seeks only to expand and to foster natural life; it does not contain this root of detachment and death you speak of, and it seems kinder than Christianity does in ignoring all intervening agencies of a painful kind, and taking us back direct to God, our loving and indulgent Father.'

'It may *appear*,' returned Philip; 'to be more indulgent, because it is content with things in their present order, and does not harass the weakness of our mortal nature by introducing within it a higher ideal, contradictory to many of its strongest instincts; but Deism, with all systems that are founded on nature and have no root beyond it, is in reality harsh, because it contains, if we consider it deeply, no element of hope or restoration. Natural religion would seek, undoubtedly, to improve and cultivate; but, as it excludes the idea of sin, it scarcely admits that there is anything either in nature or in man

which requires setting right. It does not, therefore, pain Humanity by probing its hurt as Christianity does,—

"With gentle force soliciting the dart,"—

but it ignores man's deep original wound, and on this account Pantheism, Optimism, and above all Utilitarianism, seem to me hard and material, unrecognisant of man's deeper woes and needs. Christ's teaching may be often stern and sorrowful, but He does not mock the heart as they do, by telling it that it is well that units should be weak, and wicked, and miserable, so that the world-system may work out its grand beneficent result. With Him the desolate find mercy, and no wrecked and blighted spirit need ask in sorrowful indignation—

"*Was then my broken heart*
Sole end of my creation?"

for "the care of Christianity is for particulars."[1] Natural religion will *tell* you that all is right; it will point to some general law, securing the greatest happiness to the greatest number, some principle of adaptation or compensation whose

[1] Bishop Warburton.

working is none the less "beautiful" through the mischance of its having broken some individual leg on one occasion and some accidental heart on another. Meanwhile it leaves things much as it finds them in this best of all *possible* worlds; its march is that of the caravan through the desert, which does not stop when some sick out-worn traveller drops from the advancing rank and file to perish by the way-side alone. It is Christ who delays His journey for the *one* wounded traveller, who pours wine and oil within his hurts, *who sets him on His own steed*, who provides for his final entire restoration. I may seem to speak harshly of natural religion. I do not however feel so. I have seen Deism take a form among humble unenlightened people, with few acquired ideas of any kind, in which it seemed indeed religion—clear as Wordsworth describes it, though shallow, leading to a dumb animal-like dependence on God's over-ruling providence, and forming a habit of implicit submission to His decrees. But for all spirits that have inquired more deeply, or hearts that have suffered more keenly, I cannot strongly enough express my sense of its utter inadequacy,

its inability even to account for man's present state, far less to raise him out of it; its deficiency in spiritual leverage, its want of power to reach the deeper springs of natural feeling, its impotence to feed or comfort any really hungering, thirsting, despairing soul. It does not, in homely language, "make sense" in hearts that have been ensnared by sin or wrung by sorrow. Its voice is but the pleasant voice of one that can sing sweetly to an instrument, and that only when the instrument is in perfect tune; it cannot reconcile the chords, "sweet, but in continual danger of breaking," over which passion has swept too roughly, nor repair them when they have been snapt asunder by some rude affliction. And Christianity,' continued Philip, 'is kinder even to the natural feelings than are systems which seem to give them far freer play than it does. Nature when left to itself soon tears and rends its own idols. Feeling, though it be indeed life's very soul and spring, cannot guide even to its own truest aim, and in systems where, like that of Rousseau, the whole weight is thrown upon sentiment, there is a sharp inevitable recoil, often ending in utter hardness. Natural

life, I repeat, cannot keep true to its own ideal. Let us take, as an illustration of what I mean, the love between man and woman. The perfect primitive ideal of such love, as founded on the union of two human beings, maintained during the whole of life in mutual purity and constancy, was laid, our Lord himself tells us, "in the beginning," and to this ideal Christ is favourable, making it the express image of His own love for the Church. Yet in how many ways does the rude imperfection of our nature contradict this fair ideal, swerve from it if once attained, or keep consciously below it! There is a weakness, an inconstancy in our nature, which seems to make it hard for it, whether in love, in friendship, or in the sorely-tried and much-enduring family affections, to keep true to its own best instincts, and the heart, if its annals could be written, would have as many apostasies to number as the Church has. It is surely in the region of feeling, rich, volcanic, and wasted as with fire, that Christ's doctrines become, in an especial manner, the salt of the earth. He gives to our nature that conservative element without which its best affections are apt

to tend to their own decay; in fact, without the checks and restraints Christianity imposes, the soil of life is scarcely strong enough to give the affections leave to take that firm enduring hold which makes them as self-sustaining as the passions are self-consuming. This room and space they have in Christian family life, and I think the history of human society would justify me in adding they have it *only* there. Where but in countries and societies largely permeated with the teaching of the Christian Church is marriage, even in theory, held honourable, or constancy, which is but purity in its highest expression, recognised? Whose voice except that of Christ has spoken as regards this union to the Church and to the heart alike,[1] "My dove, my undefiled *is one?*"'

[1] 'Una est columba mea, perfecta mea' (Cant. vi. 9).

'The Many could not fill
The world, in vain it strove
Each fount, each stream, each hill,
Each dim dream-haunted grove
To throng with Being, still
Through an unpeopled lone
Existence, went a moan,
"Where is the God unknown
Unfound, below, above?"
"Behold! His name is one,
Behold! His name is Love."

'I have just,' I said, 'been reading the life of Jean Paul, which illustrates what you are now saying in the extraordinary view it opens up of a society founded upon the sentimental theories so prevalent towards the close of the last century. There is an absolute worship of beauty and intellect; feeling of the most unrestrained kind is exalted into the only guide of action; and yet, what I am chiefly impressed with is the absence of any feeling of a real, abiding kind; indeed, I am struck with a great deal that looks like utter heartlessness, a little gilded over with sentiment, one ephemeral attachment succeeding another so quickly, that, as in Schiller's life, the mere following of them in the volume becomes a sort of task or puzzle. You do not know whether it is Charlotte or Caroline, or both, that the story has to do

In vain with voices loud
The Many strive to fill
The heart, they do but crowd
Its outer portals, still
The temple lacks its shrine,
The soul its guest divine;
When fleeting things have flown,
When hidden things are shown,
What makes the world's true creed
What meets the heart's deep need
In bliss or woe? Above
One God, on earth one love.'

with now! Men and women seem through it all to be taking each other up and letting each other go very easily, in the midst of suicides, exaltations, and a heart-rending amount of letter-writing. How poor is all this! how trivial!'

'It makes me,' exclaimed Philip, 'recall Beethoven's memorable saying, "Morality is the basis of all genuine invention," because, without moral restraint and the sense of permanence it tends to produce, nothing great, either in art or life, has time to grow. Life, under other conditions, is continually sapped and mined from below, and its very brilliancy becomes repulsive, like the growths of a marshy soil. It is the flowers of the rock and mountain that are the most rare in fragrance, the most delicate and vivid in hue! In the world of natural feeling it seems evident that we need Christ's yoke, and are compelled as regards it to say—

> "There is no blessedness but in such bondage,
> Sure it is sweeter far than liberty."

Christ is the friend of the heart, its needed friend, as certainly as He is the Saviour of the soul. Without the kindly shelter of His restraining precepts, the sunshine of His imparted help, it can

never bring its best fruits to maturity; they remain but "berries harsh and crude," however brilliant to tempt the hand and eye. It is most certain that man, under the present conditions of his nature, is a being requiring supernatural aid to bring that very nature to perfection—yes, even to keep it from decline. Both in the outward world and in human society under its actually existing order, a hostile, perturbing element is ever working, in apparent warfare with the original intention of God. All things natural and human, I would say, are kept at a low level, far below that to which even our own idea of perfection would point. So that we need not go to our Bibles to be taught that all of that which in our present order is evil, vain, and artificial, "is not of the Father, but of the world." Life itself teaches us this by presenting us with a fair ideal, continually, *inevitably* departed from, so that in all which is naturally most beloved and lovely in youth, parental affection, family and social life, we seem to see only the outlines and traces of a blessedness that might have been, nay, sometimes the mere *hint* of it, flashed across the soul, in those gleams which will

sometimes visit the saddest hearts, in exquisite instincts of delight that "come and go like the scent of flowers in the hand." Ste. Beuve, writing of a most unhappy and deeply erring poet, Hippolyte Moreau, whose youth had been full of sensibility and rare intellectual promise, says, "There is in each one of us a primitive ideal Being, traced out by nature with her finest, most maternal touch, which manhood itself too often warps, stifles, and corrupts." Does not this correspond with what Edward Irving said on hearing some one make the commonplace remark that it seems wonderful a helpless baby should ever grow into a man, "Wonderful, rather, that such a feeble, heartless thing as manhood should be the fruit of the rich, glorious bud of Being in childhood"?

'Therefore it is,' continued Philip musingly, 'that the Cross must enter, that it must pierce and cleave even to the dividing of man's soul and spirit, the discerning of the thoughts and intents of his heart. I do not mean,' he continued, 'to imply that the Cross repairs the wastes it finds. I do not mean to say that it explains the enigma of a blighted creation, or to infer that life and nature are

not equally a problem whether we contemplate them from a Christian or a Pagan point of view. The Cross does not account for that principle of decay involved in the very structure of Humanity, which feeds upon its inner life, like the canker within the rosebud, and destroys it through its "dark, secret love." I feel only that it consoles, as Love itself consoles, by the very presence of its sympathy. It is man's desolation met by the desolation of God; the words that were spoken from it, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" echo but do not mock the cry exceeding loud, and bitter as was that of Esau, which earth sends up from its thousands of wrecked lives, and sorrowful broken hearts. When Nature, defeated in her fairest hopes, goes *there* to ask "Hast Thou no other blessing, O my Father?" she meets with no stern denial; in the valley of bitterness a door is opened to her of fair promise and of boundless hope. Christ, as we have agreed, seems sometimes to repress Nature even as He in His life on earth sometimes repelled His own mother; yet let us not forget that it was from the cross that His kindest recorded words to her were spoken.'

CHAPTER III.

'The will of God ought to suffice us for a reason when He does a thing, for the will of God is never unreasonable; *for as with Him there is no freedom but to do what is expedient or what is fitting*, any contradiction or unfitness, however small, with God, involves impossibility, *and any reason becomes necessity.*

'Therefore, if God were unwilling that the human race should be saved, except through the death of Christ, when (as you have suggested) He could save them by His simple will, see how, in so judging, you oppose His wisdom; *for if even a man were for no sufficient reason to do that with great labour which he could have done with ease, he would certainly not be judged wise by any one.*'—ST. ANSELM.

CHAPTER III.

'I LOVE,' I said to Philip, 'to hear you approach the Cross on the side of feeling, to see you draw near it as to that which brings us into a close and tender relation with God! You so often seem to rejoice and rest in the mere certainty of our being saved through Christ's atoning work, that I sometimes think George Fox might have reproached you as he did the Puritans, with being contented with a dead Christ, when it was your privilege to claim a living One.'

'I may sometimes,' returned Philip, 'refer to Christ's work in what seems to you a dry matter-

of-fact way, simply because to me it always remains a fact, God's great accomplished fact, a deed (a legal one if you will, so have it) wrought out and attested by God Himself, as little perhaps to be understood, in its full scope and bearing, by man, who is its object, as some obscurely worded yet accurate bond or title is intelligible to the child whose claim to a property is established by it. I do not feel that my heart is in any way dead to the mute, everlasting language of the Cross, or unresponsive to the word it speaks to us in all times of our tribulation, in all times of our wealth,—

"*Good Lord, deliver us;*"

but I find the doctrines linked with it so sure and satisfactory to my reason, that the Cross has become to me in spiritual things just what the felt experienced affection of a steadfast friend becomes in natural life, *a settled axiom of the soul*—an already proven certainty which I rest in, without needing consciously to realize. And to the work of Christ upon the Cross,' he continued, 'I can commit and commend my whole spiritual destinies, and say, Let their weight hang there with Him, even in

those frequent seasons of deadness when those very sufferings and death do not powerfully affect my feelings! My feelings change with all that is so intrinsically changeful in our mortal state. Life itself will sometimes appear strangely false, dream-like and unreal, but the fact of Christ's death remains valid.

> "Thy sorrows were in earnest,
> No faint proffer,
> Thou madest there, no insufficient offer."[1]

It is true for me, inalienably true, though the poverty of my human nature forbids me either to rejoice in it, or to weep over it as I would. Even sorrow, as a French poem says, is a fruit which it requires some richness of soil to raise and ripen But the Cross, and faith in the work wrought there, is a root that can grow out of a dry ground.

> "I cannot give Youth's burning tear
> And kiss, its service glad and free;
> But I can bless Thee, O thou dear
> Redeemer, who hast died for me."

And I would say further, that I discern something in Christ's atoning work which far transcends the limits of personal feeling and experience, be

[1] George Herbert.

these never so deep and intimate; and my heart attaches itself to it *implicitly*, in the spirit of the peasant of whom St. Vincent de Paul's life tells us. Employed by some Jesuit missionaries to carry their baggage, they observed that, whenever on their journey they knelt down in prayer, he too knelt down at a humble distance. One day they asked him what he prayed for. "Gentlemen," he said, "I am but an ignorant man; I do not know what to ask God for; when I see you pray, I always pray that He will hear and answer your prayers." So it is to the work of Christ, and to Christ Himself, under His priestly office, still carrying that great effectual work forward, that the gaze of my soul is chiefly directed. I look to Him as to the Great Intercessor for the whole human race, and to His death as "*the most powerful of all intercessions*,"[1]—a silent pleading for ever present to the eternal mind. I join my broken prayers to His perpetual prayer; my feeble interrupted work to His vast unbroken plan. "Show Thy servant *Thy work*" is my heart's continual plea! Christ is not only my God, my King, my

[1] F. Faber.

Saviour; he is also my Priest, the Great High Priest of my people, "a Priest for ever," the Daysman Job desired, who should stand between God and man and lay His hand upon each; the true Aaron, made in all things like unto his brethren, upon whose bosom are engraven the names of earth's wandering tribes, but "whose Urim and whose Thummim are with His holy One," in the wisdom and perfection of God Himself.'

We were both silent for a few moments, then Philip continued,—'So that to speak of my own feelings on a subject upon which one can but speak humbly and with diffidence, I would say that ever since I *saw* Redemption to be the very core and centre of Christianity, and far more since I have *felt* it to be such, the sacrifice of Christ's death has appealed to me under its historic rather than under its ethical aspect. And looking at it in this light, it possesses for me in spiritual things what in natural things I should describe as an ascertained and positive quantity and value; so that powerful as is its hold upon my feelings, it is upon my reason that it chiefly acts. It is to me simply God's way of saving man. I know not why

it should have been chosen by Him in preference to others which would seem at once less painful and less devious, nor do I feel bound to take up the self-imposed burden of working up to it on the side of a clearly discernible moral fitness. Rather will I accept it on the guarantee of an authority which I admit to be Divine, and work *from it* towards all righteousness. The Apostles surely proceed in this way. They, in the most explicit manner, connect the fact of Christ's death and resurrection with the facts of man's deliverance from sin and from the power of the devil; they link it with his reconciliation to God and complete final moral restitution. Of this connexion we should have known comparatively little had we only possessed the Gospels, though even there we are *shown* the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Yet Christ does not bear witness of Himself. He has One that beareth record of Him: the Spirit of whom He has said, "He shall testify of me." The Epistles are, if one may so speak, saturated with a teaching which is now often decried as striking at the root of moral life in man. The doctrines of vicarious satisfaction and the

imputed righteousness of Christ thread them through and through as a leaf is threaded by its fibres. Sometimes, as in Ephesians and Colossians, they set forth the Cross under a grand outreaching aspect which associates it with the overthrow of vast systems of spiritual evil, the spoiling of principalities and powers; at other times they bring it nearer home, connecting it with the pardon of man's individual sin. Still,' continued Philip, 'by whatever light they set forth the Cross, it remains "the sign of the Son of Man," inscrutable in its very nature. The death of Christ appears, from what the Apostles tell us, to be connected with a stupendous series of events transacted in a region altogether removed from the area in which human intelligence has any cognizance. We learn, on their testimony, to link it with a chain of causes and consequences, into the sequence of which, they tell us, the Angels in vain desire to penetrate, yet, after all, they leave it unexplained as to its final cause. They never tell us *why* it was necessary that Christ should suffer.'[1]

[1] 'The revelation contained in the Scriptures extends only to *facts*, not to the theory of those facts or their original causes. The most

'True,' I answered; 'and I have been sometimes saddened as regards the Atonement, by the persistence with which theologians endeavour to force the idea of fitness where the sense of it does not naturally arise, and where the attempt to *create* it, under such circumstances, only strains the mind to a recoil of dull and wearied resistance. There is something harsh even to cruelty in the way in which religious writers persistently attribute the rejection of Christ's merits and satisfaction to what they call "the pride of human intellect." Man must be indeed proud to be too proud to like being helped by God! Why refuse to admit candidly that the tremendous fact of Christ's death, with the awful doctrine that grows out of

important truths are communicated to us in a dogmatic, not a theoretic, manner. We are taught, on the testimony of Him that cannot lie, *insulated facts which we cannot connect with those reasons with which they are undoubtedly connected in the divine mind.* They rest solely on the basis of divine authority, and we are left as much in the dark with respect to the mode of their existence as if they were not revealed.'—ROBERT HALL.

'Why,' asks St. Bernard, 'did God accomplish that by His blood which He might have accomplished by a word? Ask Himself. It is vouchsafed me to know that the *fact* is so, but not the *wherefore.*' 'Three things,' he adds, 'meet in the cross: the humility of self-renunciation; the manifestation of love, even to the death of the cross; the mystery of redemption, whereby He overcame death. *The two former are nothing without the third.* The examples of humility and love are something great, but have no firm foundation without the redemption.'

it (for Redemption, when we look into it a little closely, is unspeakably awful as to what it averts, reveals, and implies), contains something which human reason finds it *really* hard to accept, and something also to which natural feeling does not readily respond. I am certain, for my own part, that many honest and humble minds find their free reception of this doctrine beset by both intellectual and moral hindrances, while, even to some of those who accept it most fully as God's way of saving man, it still remains His strange, unlikely, roundabout way, "certain," as one of old has spoken, "because impossible."'

'And yet,' returned Philip, 'I must apply to the human intellect a truth to which we have already approached on the side of the human heart. We have often agreed that while the teaching of the Cross is in direct antagonism to the shallower stream of human life and feeling, it is in strange harmony with its deeper and stronger currents. Life's "darker ecstasies," its more impassioned moments, open up solemn far-reaching vistas, in looking through which, *and seeing what life is*, it does not seem strange to us that *if* God, a Being

infinite in benignity and in purity, indeed loves a world like ours, lying in woe and in wickedness, He should need to give Himself to restore it. What less gift than infinite love and pity, than bsolute sovereign goodness, can meet and overtake man's mighty need!'

'True,' I said, 'to a slight and superficial survey of nature and of man the great work of Christ seems utterly foreign; the mere conventional aspects of society leave no place for Him, as no room was found in the ever-bustling and changing inn. Life, "troublesome and yet beloved," goes on, and we see men, intent from age to age upon carrying on its mere outward machinery. "The hungry generations tread us down." Humanity, like the flora of some gigantic undergrowth, seems absorbed in the selfish yet necessary struggle for its mere existence. What place in this dim, overcrowded forest, with its fearful silences, broken by its strange, unintelligible cries, is there found for the solemn Cross, with its revelation of a God who loves man, and who has Himself suffered for that love? Yet life itself, viewed with a closer insight, or upon a more

extended survey, will introduce us to regions in which that very revelation seems natural, seems needed, in making man known to us as a spiritual being, with instincts which the material world around him can never satisfy. It will show us a warp and swerve in nature which seems to *demand* a mighty work of restoration, one that should far transcend that of creation in cost and effort, *as being one in which there was much found to undo.* It will reveal to us in Humanity a secret deep alienation which has, since Adam first hid himself behind the trees in the no longer happy garden, for ever driven man from God, co-existing with an instinct which for ever urges his return to Him, impelled by the "mighty famine," central to the heart of that far country in which man's lot is at present cast.'

'God, too,' returned Philip, 'will oftentimes seem to elude His creature; the supernatural which man at once shuns yet craves after, seems to visit him only in evanishing, as the way-side sleeper in Uhland's poem wakens to a lovely sound, just in time to see a flutter of the musician's garment disappear within the thick-shrouding wood! Many

I think must have felt what George Herbert expresses in such homely and affecting words, the echo of Job's testimony, familiar to many a faithful heart: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat! Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him."

"My knees pierce the earth, mine eyes the sky,
And yet the sphere
And centre both to me deny
That Thou art there!

. . . . .

Lord, dost Thou some new fabric mould
Which favour wins,
And keeps Thee present, leaving the old
Unto its sins?

Where is my God? What hidden place
Conceals Thee still?
What covert dare eclipse Thy face?
Is it Thy will?

Oh, let not that of anything!
Let rather brass
Or steel, or mountains be thy ring,
And I will pass.

Thy will such an entrenching is
As passeth thought,
To it all strength, all subtleties
Are things of nought.

Thy will such a strange distance is
As that to it
East and West touch, the poles do kiss,
And parallels meet.
. . . . .
Oh take these bars, these lengths away,
Turn, and restore me,
Be not Almighty, let me say
Against, but for me!"[1]

In another part of the same remarkable poem he intimates that outward nature, from its aspect, seems to be still rejoicing in the pact which for man is broken: the grasses beneath his feet whisper to their God, the stars in heaven commune with Him.

'I have felt,' I said, 'sometimes, when quite alone with nature, on suddenly turning into a deep silent wood, or coming out unexpectedly upon some wide expanse of sea and earth and sky, as if I were interrupting something, breaking in upon a solemn conversation.'

'Yes,' returned Philip, 'God is very near to us; nearer to us, from His infinity, than any created thing *can* be, and intercourse with Him, were we once fitted to enjoy it fully, would be more intimate, more endearing, more satisfying, and less

[1] The Search.

constraining, than any we can enter upon with our fellow-beings. With them, our highest point is reached in union; with Him, it is placed in unity itself. But God, though so near to us, is yet, under the present conditions of our being, "a great way off." The existing relation between man and Him is one that, as we may even infer from the d m unceasing searchings of Paganism, of itself involves a barrier and wall of separation; between Him and us there is ever a cloud descending from above, a mist rising from the ground which it seems one warm sun-gleam might dissipate, one soft breeze might waft away; yet is it harder to be pierced through than steel and adamant. It is in the human heart, too, which of all things fashioned by God most needs and claims His presence, that this alienation is most strongly felt. It is His citadel, His stronghold, yet it holds out against Him to the very last, so that He has often to say, "Who will lead me into the strong city, who will bring me into Edom?" What heart that ever looks into itself at all has not encountered that strange difficulty in approaching God, in realizing His actual presence, in obeying His

known commands, which makes conversion only another word for reconciliation? Its very nature implies the yearning desire for a restoration to a communion long interrupted, impeded, and all but finally broken. The sweetest, most familiar images of Scripture are such as connect it with the idea of the return of a wandering child, the recovery of a lost treasure, the bringing back of a strayed sheep. And thus it is that almost every true and deep conversion[1] begins in sorrow, and is often attended with overwhelming anxiety and alarm, so that the first language of the new-born soul, as of the new-born infant, is usually a cry. "Who," exclaims Paul, "shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Depart from me," says Peter, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

'Between Him and us,' I said, 'there is evidently some gulf to be spanned, some chasm to be bridged across. A work is needed to bring God and man together,—a mighty work,—*one not to be done by man.* So that even our unaided reason, which might, it would seem, have been

1 'When God,' says Bunyan, 'would put a soul in tune for Himself, He most commonly begins upon the lowest note.'

content with a Buddha, a wise and mighty teacher sent from God, a Messiah able to show it all things, will of itself ask for a Saviour, "One who taketh away the sins of the world." When, too, we pass from the sphere of intellect into that of feeling, how many of the deepest instincts of our nature will be found to lie very near the strange, mysterious doctrines of the Gospel, and most near of all to those connected with the vicarious work of Christ, which seem, when we approach them from the side of mere everyday experience, to be "out of court," and foreign to the order in which we are now moving. He who has learnt to look upon himself as "related on one side to spirit, on another bound to the animal," who sees his own nature shattered upon some sides, fettered and limited upon all, yet at the same time open to spiritual influences, and free as to innate choice and will, will be at any rate prepared to admit the central mystery of Christianity, redemption, or, in other words, "deliverance from without." Can we imagine any being, at once so needing this, or so fitted to profit by it as is man? any Being so able to give it to him as is God?

The work and death of Christ seems to me a strange fact flashed forth upon an awful background, a darkness made for it by God Himself; it is isolated even to unintelligibility when we view it from the level tracks along which human life and thought usually move; but let us pierce deeper or mount more high, and it will become clear, even as the stars do when we look up at them out of a deep sunken shaft, or gaze from the summit of a lofty hill.'

Philip was silent for a few moments, then he said, as if to meet and help forward my thought:—'That the innocent should suffer for the guilty is doubtless foreign to our ordinary ideas of what is feeling, and out of harmony with our sense of what is just and right, and yet that innocence can and *does* so atone for guilt is an idea deep seated in the natural heart, and one to which many of its innate instincts lead. How many an old classical legend and Hindu myth betrays, as regards this point, an intuition of the secret through which the universe is redeemed! And so with regard to expiation, propitiation, and the whole circle of ideas and

images strange and fearful, and far removed from all that we should *a priori* expect of God,—these, like Wordsworth's cloud, "move together if they move at all." We cannot separate them from each other or from the fact that Christ *did* die, and they seem to agree with that fact far better than do the theories which, excluding these doctrines, profess to see in that death a simple exhibition of moral grandeur. Such a view of Christ's death, a moonlight view I would call it, sentimental, transparent, and unvivifying, we find in the later writings of Lamennais, who, while he abjured all in it that was sacrificial, continued to adore it as an example of self-immolating love. Jowett too, I see, calls the death of Christ the greatest moral act the world has ever seen, but surely where the idea of His vicarious satisfaction for sin is rejected, and Christ is no longer "man's generous-hearted substitute," His death becomes an act without any moral significance whatever, an act without meaning of any kind. For let us suppose, in accordance with the views set forth by many modern teachers, that Christ died to give us a great example of self-devotion, we must

remember that self-devotion, even when carried to the pitch of self-immolation, is not valuable, is not even beautiful, except when it promotes some high efficient end not to be otherwise attained. Under any other aspect it is perverse and futile, as when shown in the acts of an Indian Fakir. And Christ did not die as Decius and Curtius are supposed to have done, to achieve a great, actual, visible deliverance, neither, like Regulus, to carry out a lofty principle, nor yet, as in the case of Guyon of Marseilles, was His life laid down for the obtaining of an eminent practical good. What end, looking at it in a merely rational light, and with reference to what was then happening in the world around Him, did the death of Christ subserve? Why, if it were not to avert some awful spiritual penalty, to win some eternal spiritual boon, *did Christ die?* Unitarians say that it was to set the seal and attestation to His teaching, to prove that self-sacrifice is the necessary culmination of love—but is this true of self-sacrifice?'

'I think not,' I answered. 'Self-sacrifice in a world like ours, full of pain and imperfection, is

often imperatively demanded by love, but it seems to form no part of love's essence, which is *simply to love*, to delight in the affection, and in the society of that which is beloved, and to seek to promote its good,—a good never *naturally* to be sought in the immolation of one for the sake of the other, but rather in mutual enjoyment and the delight that only lives in reciprocity. Surely to live for our friends, to live with them, to make them happy, is a far more natural aim and result of love than any craving desire to die for them.'

'True,' returned Philip, 'it is love which love calls for, Love, not sacrifice, which is the answer to its mighty claim, and, missing which, it misses all it seeks. Yet sacrifice of self, when such a sacrifice is beneficial to the being beloved, still remains love's crowning manifestation, its highest conceivable expression: "greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends." All it needs is a cause shown, and we may be sure that the travail of our Saviour's soul, beholding the result of which "He was satisfied," was towards some great efficient end. It was not surely to *show* us anything, even His love itself,

that Christ died. It would have been happiness enough for man to be beloved by Him, *to know himself beloved*, without so costly and painful a proof. It is not difficult when man loves man to know it; if deeds fail, a word will reveal it; if words fail, a look is more eloquent than all. The very presence of love is its own continual revelation, and he who possesses the heart, as La Bruyère says, does not *need* even its spoken confidence, so naturally do two spirits, really in accord, overflow while they lean towards each other. We may then be sure that one moment's spiritual contact with God would be enough to fill and flood the soul of man with inconceivable, unutterable bliss—with joy,' continued Philip, 'that would leave him no room to ask for any sign. The death of Christ has undoubtedly exercised an extraordinary influence on man's heart, *but was it to this end that Christ died?* The apostles, speaking on this great subject, use language which implies that the work done by Christ in dying lay more, if I may so express it, between Christ and God, than between Christ and man. I know it is usual to think far otherwise—usual to think of

the reconciliation Christ's death effected as the mere removal of some check and hindrance on man's side, which, coming between the soul and God, intercepted the light of His favour. On God's side, we are told, there *could* be nothing to remove. But does the Gospel hold this language, or are we taught it by the Law, our schoolmaster in Divine truth? Do we hear it either in the Christian Church, living in the strength of its one perpetual oblation, sacrifice, and satisfaction; or in the Jewish Temple, dim with the smoke of unnumbered sacrifices? Is it echoed in those awful Apocalyptic voices which cry, "Worthy the Lamb, *for Thou wast slain*, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation"? The ideas these tremendous words and images excite, however foreign they may be to human reason, and however repellent, in some respects, to natural feeling, are at any rate consistent with each other, and with the crowning act they typify. They are also consistent with life, for there is nothing,' added Philip, 'so strange and sorrowful as life itself, except the cross which redeems it; it alone goes

"deeper than deepest anguish," and there is doubtless in most human hearts a Gethsemane, known only to itself and to its Maker, a place where it has been exceeding sorrowful even unto death,—perhaps a Calvary where it has endured death itself, "even the death of the cross."

CHAPTER IV.

'Oh! let me then in Thee
Be bound, in Thee be free!
A law of death in me
I find, a law in Thee
Of life, that grows to fullest liberty!

Bind thou this bondman strong,
That rules, encroaching long
Where he should serve, and through thy death and pain
Set thou the spirit free
That born to liberty
Still pines! a King that wears a captive's chain!'

CHAPTER IV.

WE were both some little time silent. Philip then resumed. '"One deep calleth unto another." A shallow view of life rejects the Cross, just as a shallow theology rejects it, but it is in alliance with all our deepest experiences, whether in the spiritual or natural order. It is not only in Genesis that the fall of man is written, not only by the pen of the blessed Evangelists that his recovery is proclaimed. Let us look where we will, either in the past or present, we shall see Humanity ensnared, enslaved, degraded; also we shall see in human nature, *simply as it is*, a New Testament, the

elements of a better resurrection. How wonderful even in the least excellent of human beings are the latent possibilities of good! What gleams do we find among low and degraded natures of an excellence only able to reveal and maintain itself in a momentary flash, like that which Homer says is apt to prelude death, yet proving through that very flash its own deep hidden life. It is evident that man's wound is curable; he is a being at once needing to be *restored, and capable of being so.* In the depths of our mortal nature lies a dark unsunned well, too deep sunk for the events of common life to stir and touch it, the waters of which, *when troubled,* reflect the Cross, and prepare man's heart for the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, *i.e. deliverance through a work not his own.* Life's deepest moments rouse man from the lethargy which its ordinary course weaves round him, and bid him listen for the footstep of Reuben coming to release him, where he lies tied and bound, and incapable of effort, at the bottom of the pit, "wherein is no water."'

'True,' I said; 'human nature is vast, complicated, and out-reaching. There are many pro-

blems in our hearts and lives not to be reached and answered, as well-meaning people will try to meet and answer them, by a text; and yet I have often thought that these very texts, if we understood them and ourselves better, *fit* each other, even as a key fits the ward it was made to unlock. Physiology itself, through simply extending our knowledge of man's structure and organism, justifies many of the doctrines it is usual to call "evangelical." He who has learnt to look upon himself as "on one side related to spirit, on the other bound to the animal," who sees that he is shattered on some sides of his nature, limited upon them all, who has often felt strangely antagonistic forces at work within the being he calls himself, and owned that his very will is not wholly under his own command, will not, I think, be much of a Pelagian. So much will the vast, dark, ruined world he finds within him lead him to rely on a power exterior to himself, a spirit to move upon the chaos, a sovereign "word" to call out of its midst the struggling elements and seeds of beauty and order and perfection. Man has in his own nature moments of immediate personal revelation,

that enable him to understand the general revelation of the written Word; dark gulfs are disclosed to him; sublime, *impossible* heights are for a moment won; unspeakable glories are disclosed, flashed upon the soul to fade in the flash that brings them. Out of the depths humanity cries out unto its God. Pain, love, sin, despair,—these make us understand how, if not *why*, it was that Christ tasted death for every man. Man at ordinary moments does not know either how wicked or how good he is—does not know either how much he needs to be saved, or how well he is worth saving.'

'Yes,' said Philip, 'you and I have often dwelt together upon the strange way in which life itself seems to veil and shroud life's true import and grandeur. Man, under the ordinary conditions it presents to him, is (more or less consciously) living far below his powers and capabilities, and it is to the desire to escape out of this fettering bondage of circumstances, the wish to be *himself*, to live out his whole nature, even for a moment, that we may trace our love for excitement, pleasure, splendour, for all that, at whatever cost, intensifies and glorifies life—'

'And with that desire, too,' I said, 'we might possibly connect man's more fierce and fearful outbreaks; for it is not only the higher part of our nature that is fettered by the routine we have been speaking of. People may live long, and only learn through some sudden experience what is the strength of an evil instinct long dormant in the heart, "buried but not dead." Hatred and envy are far more common than we think of, or at least care to acknowledge; their full bloom and outburst is greatly held in check by the circumstances and surroundings of modern life, yet their principles are intertwined with the roots of our very being.'

'True,' resumed Philip; 'our best and our worst grow very close together; and the heart of man, out of its poverty, and out of its wealth alike, *when he has once learnt either the depth or extent of either*, will testify to him of his need of a Saviour. It will show him a dark, secret inherency of evil, a stern outward bondage of circumstance, a "siege perilous" for ever going on against a principle of goodness, also latent in our nature,—yet, without a superadded energy, too weak for ultimate victory. It is not in the heart itself—that the heart,

be it the truest and kindest that ever was fashioned by God—can trust in the fierce assaults of temptation. If bid to wrestle with it, its answer may well be that of Rosalind,—"*Alas! but it takes the part of a better wrestler than myself.*" Neither will it turn to the world, Egypt, that broken reed, hollow, frail, and deceiving, that has never failed to pierce to the very heart him who has leaned upon it in the hour of need. Man, in the extremity of conflict, is thrown back upon his God; and I would say again, that Nature itself, when taken at its highest note, whether of ecstasy or anguish, will respond to the very chords that, at a lower pitch of feeling, seem most utterly jarring and dissonant with her loud, continual chorus—sacrifice, intervention, substitution. These ideas are not foreign to the heart that warmly loves or deeply suffers. "*He that loves*," as says St. Chrysostom, "if it *be not God, but man*," will at any rate understand us when we use them; for if he who loves not knows not God, there is yet another thing which I will venture to affirm him ignorant of, and that is the excellence of which his own spirit is capable. Any one who has truly loved another human being,

knows that there is no conceivable amount of misery and degradation that he would not, if it were possible, bear for that person, or share with him, even with joy; and if we once suppose the heart's scope to be widened, and its aim fixed on a higher end, *why should not Love be content to suffer for any person, why not for every one?* In all that concerns feeling, in a certain sense, the less includes the greater, through the boundless possibilities it opens up. And as one warm waft of air will sometimes bring in the whole Spring upon its breath, as Summer will wrap its whole sweetness within the leaves of one thick, close-folded rose, so can one moment's experience of intense feeling, of whatever kind, admit the heart to the whole world that feeling makes a part of, whether it be of ecstasy or anguish.'

'What I have seen,' I said, 'among men, and these not the most morally exalted, has convinced me that what the Bible calls the law of Christ is the law of our own nature, and proved to me that the natural heart contains within itself the germ and principle out of which all the super-

natural graces can unfold, when they once come into quickening contact with that which is Divine. And though we have agreed that sacrifice forms no part of love's essential nature, yet supposing the object of love to be a being at once guilty, oppressed, and suffering, such as man must always appear to the view of God, and such as one man will sometimes appear in the eyes of a happier friend, a sacred thirst for sacrifice through love seems to waken naturally in the mind. How often, when we suffer with the suffering, we long to suffer *for* them, supposing this to be practicable; and to suffer with and for the guilty is but another form of this deep and generous yearning, native to so many hearts. And to hearts to whom such feelings are familiar, it no longer seems so strange that God should Himself endure evil, as that He should permit it to reign over others, even for a day, and, in their manner of considering things, one blighted mortal life, one wrecked immortal spirit, becomes a problem far less scrutable than that of Christ's atoning death. If there were no other way to save man, we might be sure that Christ would take this one, and that He *did*

take it, leads on to the inference, to which St. Anselm points, "*that there was no other to be found.*"'

Philip mused. 'How often,' he said, 'in contemplating Christianity as a whole, especially as it appears in the central fact of its great sacrifice, "a God dying upon a cross,"[1] I have felt it to be the world's chief wonder, one which my eyes could never weary, nor my spirit rightly fathom! When I have turned aside to behold that strange sight of omnipotence even embracing ignominy, of blessedness submitting itself to pain, of glory condescending to shame, of purity taking the place of sin (for He, says St. Paul, was made sin for us), I have felt that to understand the Passion one must be one's-self, as it were, God infinite, and able to comprehend the love and the agony of an infinite nature. This sight, of all I look upon, alone has power to arrest my heart. It seems foreign to the order in which I am at present moving, yet it is friendly, familiar to some inner instinct, as if it were native to a kingdom in

[1] Lacordaire.

which I had once moved. We are told of self-sacrifice, that it is "the law" or moving power of Christ's kingdom; it is certainly far from being the law of natural life, yet have you not remarked that it seems to stir the heart, even as beauty moves the senses, infallibly, by touching the spring of some hidden sure affinity, lying deeper than the nature with which it seems at present to war?'

'Yes,' I said, 'and looking at human affairs in a practical work-a-day light, I have often felt a significance in the fact that nothing belonging to Christ's kingdom *tells* much upon the world which has not in it the element of sacrifice and of Christ-like willingness to participate in pain. A righteous man may effect much good, through beneficent deeds and wise and kind plans for the benefit of others; but it is to the *good* man, the man for whom some peradventure would even dare to die, the man who himself, if need were, would die for men, that the hearts of men cleave. To men who, like St. Vincent de Paul, could *live* with galley slaves, in sight of wretchedness that no tongue can utter, in contact with all that is most foul, abject, and repulsive, so that by any means he

may save some. To men who, like the blessed Peter Claver, can spend years upon years on the burning sand of a foreign shore, to be the first to welcome the dark slave-ship with its freight of human wretchedness, over-weighted with miserable bodies and souls for which no man cared. To men who, like Fra Thomas de Jesu, sent from the Court of Portugal on a mission to Algiers, *stayed* until his death in prison, to console the captives it was out of his power to ransom. It is men like these, or like the many men and women who in our own age and country bury their hearts and lives in some great obscure work, known to no one but God and to those who have no friend but Him, it is these *alone*, I have observed, who have the Christ-like power of winning, comforting, and reclaiming man's wandering perverted soul. So I doubt not when the saints are more perfectly joined to Christ than they can be in this present dispensation, *we shall find that to be with Him in glory will be to be more imbued with His especial law of life.* We shall be then able to help others more than is now possible. Our spirits, set free from the law of self in our members

which resists the law of love, will be able to do and bear more for the world, so long as it still continues a suffering world, until the days when death shall be swallowed up in victory.'

'So much,' returned Philip, 'even in the natural region, is often gained by contact with a soul at once stronger and purer than our own, that even the natural heart will, as we have said, claim its Saviour; it will desire one who has *given Himself* for it to restore it to purity and joy, it will ask for deliverance through one more mighty than itself, for communion with one who is more pure. Could its annals be ever written, they would tell not only of martyrdoms, of self-abnegation endured in the strength of merely human love, but also of miracles wrought out by its quickening energizing power. How many lives deadened by failure and disappointment have been lifted into fresh vigour by the touch of a strong and friendly hand; how many depressed and discouraged spirits has the warm breath of kindness floated into an atmosphere in which *their own wings* can expand, a sunshine which, but for their blessed intervention, they would have never reached. No wonder,

then, that the heart of man should feel strangely yet sweetly at home in the region of spiritual intervention; no wonder that expiation, and the giving up of life for life, that intercession for others, which is but the practical extension of the atonement, the pouring out of one human soul for another in prayer, even as Christ's soul was poured forth for the world in agony and death, should become the natural language of every heart whose highest energies divine grace has touched and kindled into life. 'Intercession,' said Philip, 'is the mother tongue of the whole family of Christ. Here, under whatever other differences,

> "Their speech is one,
> Their witnesses agree."

The Saint, be he Catholic or Protestant, bears the world upon his heart, the careless, wicked, suffering world, as Christ bore it upon the cross. He knows that it is still in bondage with its children, unable to work out its own deliverance, but *he* will agonize for it in the strength of the Saviour whom it has rejected; he knows that it cannot weep over an alienation which it does not feel, but *his* tears shall flow for it in

secret places. The Saint loves the world as Christ loved it, and desires to suffer for it *through an instinct, which tells him that so only can its highest deliverance be wrought out.* Xavier, before setting forth on his great mission, had a vision, in which every conceivable form of danger, persecution, and death, was placed before him as his portion, which beholding, he exclaimed, "Yet more, O Lord, yet more!" Compare this with what Brainerd tells us of the beginning of his ministry, and of that deep preparation of heart in which, when yet young, he spent hours and days, as he writes in his diary, "in the power of intercession for precious, immortal souls, for the advancement of the kingdom of my dear Lord and Saviour in the world. I feel," he continues, "withal a most sweet resignation, and even consolation and joy, in the thought of suffering hardships, distresses, and even death itself in the promotion of it, and had special enlargement in pleading for the enlightening and conversion of the poor heathen. In the afternoon God was with me of a truth, and it was blessed company indeed. God enabled me so to agonize in prayer that I was

quite wet with sweat, though in the shade, and the wind cool. My soul was drawn out very much for the world; *I grasped for multitudes of souls.* I think I had more enlargement for sinners than for the children of God, though I felt as if I could spend my life in cries for both. I pleaded earnestly for my own dear brother John, that God would make him more of a pilgrim and stranger on the earth; and fit him for singular serviceableness in the world; and my heart sweetly exulted in the Lord, in the thoughts of any distresses that might alight *on him or me* in the advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth." '

CHAPTER V.

'Full of awe is creation,
Nor does any creature
Strike awe deep as man.'—SOPHOCLES.

'There may be beings in the universe whose capacities and knowledge and views may be so extensive as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear *natural; i.e.* analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation, as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us.'—BUTLER.

CHAPTER V.

I REPEATED these words of Brainerd's musingly, '*My heart sweetly exulted in the thought of any distresses that might alight on him or me in the advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.*' 'So then,' I said, 'our talk has brought us round to the one subject, so full to both of us of magnetic interest, that we never seem quite to leave it, however wide a sweep our thoughts take. Like Thor's giant battle-hammer, even when flung forth javelin-wise, it returns, of its own accord, to the hand that casts it. Many years have now passed over us since we first entered upon the question of the strange affinity

of Christianity with pain, sorrow, and death, and all that I have since seen and learnt in spiritual things has but tended to bring the fact of this affinity into more clear and strong relief. In the life of every individual Christian there is a large experience of sadness which seems to make all true and deep conversion a literal baptism unto Christ's death; and when we turn from individual to organic life, the shadows do but deepen! What olden Saga is so dark, so sorrowful, so tracked by error, so stained with crime, as is the history of the Christian Church? Her attitude is one of unceasing antagonism with the great forces of nature which surround her; at once oppressed and an oppressor, a sufferer and one who causes woe, she can only triumph at a mighty cost; so that she seems, in Lacordaire's energetic words, to be "born crucified"—appointed to a foreseen death! Christ is a conqueror whose victories have been always won through loss and humiliation. His battle-flag, like that of Sigurd, while it has insured triumph to those who followed it, has brought destruction to him who carried it. How strange, too, in all that concerns the deve-

lopment of Christianity, is its profound *désaccord* with nature; its tendency, even in repressing man's lower instincts, to come into collision with many of the better and nobler elements of human life, its hostility to the onward march of humanity, its fixed antagonism to many aspects of social joy and mental freedom! Many of Christ's spoken precepts, so kindly and gentle in their wording, tend, if strictly carried out, to crush the frail grass and bloom of our mortal nature within a grasp of iron; and yet He is set forth to us in Scripture as life itself! Of life, not in its mere continuance, but of life in its full, unfettered expansion, He is the Lord and Giver. "I am come," He says, "that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly." He it is, too, who is Death's predestined conqueror, the promiser of unbounded joy'

'We shall be better able,' returned Philip, 'to enter into Christ's changeful attitude towards humanity, and to see how it is that, under some aspects, He seems to nurse and foster it, under others to repress and even blight it, when we have learnt, as I have so often said, to look upon His

whole work and office as remedial, and in a certain sense temporary. Christ is in all things self-sacrificing. He was so in His first leaving the joy which He had from the beginning, and coming into our world; He was so in His life, in His death, and in the work which through that life and death He accomplished for man; He is so, too, in the great end of that accomplished work, which consists in a voluntary self-effacement, so that God may be all in all. His present work, like all that is remedial, is sorrowful,—a work connected with exclusion, excision, with stern repression, with all that is most trying to the natural heart. He, like unto His Father in all things, knows like Him what it is to "cause grief" to that which is most dear of all. As God spared not His beloved Son, but gave Him up freely unto death, so Christ spares not the Church which He loves, and for which He gave His own life. He who was Himself a Victim is also a Priest, *and as such demands a victim.* He is "a Priest for ever," and His sacrificial knife (as I said to you so long ago) is far keener than that of the old Covenant, because it goes nearer to the heart. And though we know not *why* it

was "necessary" that Christ should die, we can surely see in some degree why it is necessary that the Church should suffer. We are told that He is "a refining fire," and we know that the human soul, wherewith His work has to do, is a precious and glorious thing, thrid through and through with a debasing alloy, from which only the action of fire can free it. I know,' continued Philip, 'how distasteful this aspect of our relations with the Divine is to the general feeling of our own day, and I am well aware of the harsh perversions to which in former ages it has submitted, the fearful transformations it has assumed. Still I can never close my heart against a lesson taught not only by my Saviour in "precept upon precept," but enforced by the everlasting witness of His death, "that he who loveth his life shall lose it, and he who hateth his life shall keep it to life eternal;" nor can I shut my eyes to the fact, that the life in Christ is a spiritual resurrection, and *as being such* demands death, in order to its accomplishment, "even the death of the Cross."'

'Yes,' I said, 'every spirit that is profoundly Christian, every heart that has drawn near that of

are witnesses to instincts deep seated in man's heart, to truths communicated and revealed to him by God, which he may often disallow and protest against, but can never wholly lose sight of; and among these I would say there is none more profound than man's sense of alienation from God, and his need, *at whatever cost*, of being brought back to Him. Yes, I would say further, that the more we know of ourselves—the more we learn of man as a whole—so much the more we are thrown back upon the primary elements of Christian doctrine, and the more clearly do we recognise the facts of intervention, substitution, vicarious satisfaction, which lie at its very centre. These,' continued Philip, 'are its rudiments, its glorious alphabet, stammered over, travestied through their unintelligent repetition, vulgarized, as a first reading-lesson might be by ignorant, uncouth children in a village school, yet containing within them the initials of all that poetry and eloquence in their sublimest, tenderest range can ever reach. We know not, as I have said, *why* Christ should suffer; but the more we know of man, the more clearly do we see that our own case is not one which any

merely reformative social agency can meet. The wound of Humanity is, as our great poet has called it, "wide and universal," and it requires to be met by an infinite death.' Philip paused, and resumed, 'But to enter into the heart of this mystery we must be prepared to find the counter-sign (if I dare so speak) of redemption not so much in love as in sin. It was sin which brought down Christ from Heaven,[1] it was sin which nailed Him to the cross, it is sin which in His suffering members upon earth makes Him even now among us as one crucified. "One deep calleth to another." If we would find the key to Christ's atoning work, a key which (to quote Bunyan once more) "grates hard in the lock," we shall find it in the fall of man.'

'And we shall find too,' I interposed questioningly, 'that these two doctrines, the fall of man, and his redemption through Christ's death, are always accepted or rejected *together*. Where there is a disposition to ignore or question one, the hold upon the other slackens.'

[1] 'That the body of sin might be destroyed.'

CHAPTER V.

with His Father above, in communion with whom He passed whole nights. Angels, in times of extremest need, were His comforters; the devils, we may remark, *knew* Him, they recognised Him, and accosted Him as a being at once familiar and dreaded, yet capable, even by them, of being moved by prayer and entreaty. Christ, it is evident, when yet on earth, moved habitually in a sphere to which man, under his ordinary conditions of being, has no access—among beings invisible to man, although his spiritual destinies both for good and evil have become involved with theirs. Christ was truly

> "Encompassed all His hours
> By fearfullest powers,"

and apostolic testimony makes it evident that it was among them that His great work lay. What do we know of the universe of God,—of its rulers, its powers, its principalities, its hierarchies of blessed angels, its dominations and thrones of dark iniquity, its "Spiritual wickedness in high places?" We are accustomed to speak of "the other world," as if it were, as hymn-books say, "a land of calm delight," but what do we *know* of it?'

'I think we know,' I interposed, 'a good deal; there is a spiritual world within man as well as one without and beyond him; a world upon which, as we have more than once remarked, many of the abnormal conditions of our own nature, such as dreams, delirium, and insanity, give us strange out-looks; indeed, our own nature, without passing into these extreme transformations, can sometimes, when wound up to its highest pitch, through religious enthusiasm or other vehement emotion, touch upon the borders of a super-sensual world; a world of which our present life is but the pale shadow; a world of fuller bloom, of freer life, and of richer energy. A super-sensual world I have called it, yet is it one fearfully allied with sense, and one to which the senses open the door, while through them man is as it were *wooed* to enter upon the strange and ruined splendour of a palace that was once his home.'

'True,' returned Philip, 'there is a world within us as well as a world beyond, teeming with undeveloped forces—a world, the distinguishing principle of which is freedom, just as the distinguishing mark of animal life is law and bondage,—*freedom*,

however, to evil as well as to good. The spiritual element needs to be reclaimed, the spiritual kingdom to be subdued. Here, too, is a Saviour needed, a mighty Conqueror, one who can subdue its kings and lead its dark captivities captive. Do you remember a book of Isaac Taylor's, in which he says that our Saviour's life and work on earth always impress him with a feeling of things *done by the way*, just as a benevolent person, bent upon some vast political enterprise, might do some deeds of kindness, and scatter a few bounties in a town or village he passed through? Christ's great work, it is evident, was to destroy the work of the devil. The kingdom with which He contends, and that which He establishes, are alike invisible, and of the laws which govern either we know, except obliquely and indirectly, absolutely nothing. Christianity stands up before us like some plant of strange and foreign growth in the centre of an English landscape, a Yucca or Agave, whose very aspect carries our thought to scenes far removed from those that now surround it, to conditions of existence altogether dissimilar to those it is at present subject to. What do we

know, as I have said, of this unseen, but most real world? May not it have its "dread necessities," its demands that are not to be evaded, even as our present order has those of war, disease, and death? Looking at Christ's vicarious satisfaction with a reference to these, may it not in a sense as wide as the universe itself have been "necessary that He should suffer'?'

CHAPTER VI.

'An Ash know I standing
Named Yggdrasil,
A stately tree sprinkled
With water the purest;
Thence come the dew-drops
That fall in the dales;
Ever blooming, it stands
O'er the Urdar-fountain.

'Yggdrasil's Ash
More hardships bears
Than men imagine;
The hart bites above
At the sides it rots,
Below gnaws Nidhögg.'

THE PROSE EDDA.

CHAPTER VI.

I WAS accustomed to listen to my friend, and not to argue with him. I found it the safest way! Sometimes, as in the present instance, I would feel my thoughts carried, *drifted* along with his (as a bird might be borne upon a strong swift wind) so far away from home, that I had some difficulty in finding my way back again.

'But what you are now saying,' I suggested, 'seems to imply the existence of two original and almost equal powers. It sounds very like Manichæism?'

'So,' returned he quietly, 'I have been some-

times told, but the days for me are long past (if indeed for me they ever existed) when a word or name could alarm me. I have learned to hold with Newman, that one of the surest marks of a living faith is its "disregard of consequences;" and, among all Butler's deep sayings, there are no words which I indorse more fully than those in which he bids us know, that if a truth be once established, *objections* are nothing, the one being founded on our knowledge, the other on our ignorance. The existence, reality, depth of evil, is to me an established fact and certainty. I feel evil at work within me; I see it at work around me. I know not how far its root is *inherent* in natural and in human life, but it is one which shows itself wherever life appears, and bears upon it life's infallible sign-mark, *the tendency and the power to reproduce its own existence.* It is very easy, no doubt, and it may possibly be pleasant, to add, as Browning does, to evil the epithet of "blessed," or to speak of it as "goodness in the making," but practically I have never been able to detect any disposition in evil to pass into or transmute itself to good. And I must own that nothing has ever

seemed to me so thin and shallow as the sentimental theory of evil, unless perhaps it is the merely theological one. Each seems in regarding evil to miss that which gives it its true sting and bitterness—I mean its departure from that "true order of things," in conforming to which a wise heathen places man's highest happiness. With the theologian sin is the violation of a sort of divinely constituted etiquette. It is viewed as a simple offence against what is termed God's glory, to be atoned for as might be an offence against any earthly prerogative by timely performance of some act of prescribed homage. With the sentimentalist it is still more easily condoned, as, according to his view of human affairs, it is simply mistake and error, and the transgressor is one who merely needs to be counselled, admonished, possibly to be caressed, for wells of latent goodness and nobility to spring up within him. It is true, no doubt, that outlaws, outcasts, penitents, have about them a certain picturesqueness of outline when seen just *at the proper distance*—a distance which we may observe that the mere sentimentalist is careful not to diminish by too close and actual contact! Yet how

are we meanwhile to regard the *im*penitent sinner, and those whom his conduct makes wretched? Shall we find many gleams of tender poetry in coarse licentiousness, in hardened cruelty, in grasping fraud? Shall we strike many sparks of latent nobility from evil under the less violently aggressive, but no less real aspects under which it is constantly re-appearing in social life—in the moral imbecility that cannot rise to even the conception of elevated goodness—in selfishness, prejudice, wayward obstinacy—in the "infinitely little" in all its forms? The sentimentalist seems to forget the utter wretchedness wrong-doing works to man as much as the theologian occupied with the question of its quantitative weight and value as an offence against God ignores it; yet what, after all, *is* sin, but in the deepest sense "the transgression of the law," that law of order, of justice, of beauty and perfection, upon the right working of which all the happiness of man depends—of man who is actually hurt and injured when it is invaded, which, as far as we know, cannot be the case with God. How weary I am of the everlastingly-repeated commonplaces which tend to confound vice and virtue,

such as "splendid sins" and "virtues of which hell is full!" I know of no virtue which could by any possibility exist in hell, nor do I know any sin which is not in its very essence mean, and foul, and debasing, at war with all that is truly beautiful and great.'

'I agree with you,' I said, 'as to the different roots good and evil spring from. Evil will disappear for a time, then re-appear, as a plant does "whose seed is in itself," but never in any form of good. I have watched this very carefully both upon a grand scale, as it is seen in national life, and in the great outlines and features of history; also in its more minute, but equally marked developments, in that which is social, family, and individual, and I have never seen anything to change the Scriptural verdict, which assures us, that as the "work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever," so is the doom, the ultimate issue of evil, found, "in tribulation, wrath, and anguish," unto all with which it has to do. I see in it no connexion whatever with good. Good and evil, even if they spring into life at the same moment, are antagonistic even

from before their birth. Like the twins of Hebrew story, they are brought forth in a struggle for mastery—a contest which must last as long as either lives, and end in the death of one or the other. Human life, it is true, is a field overrun with mingling growths, where good and evil meet and mix, and grow together in close neighbourhood, and sometimes in apparent amity, "till the harvest;" but between them there is never true alliance, affinity, or reconcilement.

"'The wounds of deadly hate have pierced too deep.'"

'If evil hates good, and delights to check, to blight, to contravene its working, so is evil repellent unto goodness, hated by it even unto death, so that death, by a good being, would be chosen, embraced, and welcomed before communion with what is false, and impure, and wicked would be endured. This sense of profound antagonism,' continued Philip, 'seems to strengthen within the soul as its spiritual life deepens; as its longing after purity grows more fervent, its abhorrence of evil becomes more felt and personal, so that it learns to enter into the many passages of Scripture which,

while they invest evil with a terrific vitality, speak of it as fore-doomed and self-impelled to destruction. Evil seems, under present order, as some of the parables of our Lord would intimate, to be spared on account of intermixing good. It is probably *saved* by it, through the system of expiation for ever at work in God's spiritual kingdom, but we may surely say of it in the spirit of the Roman of old, that it *must* perish! "*Delenda est Carthago,*" its fate is already sealed. There is a centrifugal force in evil, which seems, unless it is met, checked, and countervailed by good, to hurry it onwards to exhaustion and consequent extinction. Both in individual and in family life, and in that of the state or nation, we see how a little good, like the salt to which it is compared in Scripture, maintains, while it lasts, a certain principle of cohesion among many warring elements; but when *that* is lost or utterly vitiated the whole system collapses at once. Do you remember the emphatic words in which D'Argenson, describing the state of moral degeneracy which France had reached under Louis Quinze, seems almost to predict the First Revolution?— "*On ne voit que des gens aujourd'hui dont le cœur*

est bête comme un cochon, car le siècle est tourné à cette paralyse de cœur. Faute d'affection et de la faculté cordiale ce royaume-ci périra."

'And this tendency of evil to work out its own decay is so sure and irresistible that it is scarcely possible for the mind to frame the abstract conception of a state of society in which evil should be throned and regnant; we feel that such a state, though it might exist for a while, could not *last*, but must inevitably succumb to its own principle of internecine discord. I have observed this,' continued Philip, 'very narrowly, yet I have also seen that evil, however self-destructive in its working, will after apparent death revive, re-appear, re-assert its power, and like the beast whose deadly wound was healed, once more speak great things. It is, like good, a persevering thing; and seeing this, I cannot refuse to believe that evil like good is upheld by some great spiritual power, hidden from us even as God is, but to be traced, as He is, through manifestations and workings, not always clearly distinguishable from His.'

'Yes,' I said, 'the history of the Christian Church is that of a Divine working manifestly hindered,

grievously interrupted, and also so strangely *counterfeited*, that we shall scarcely ever find any deep spiritual awakening in any community or in any heart which is not attended and sometimes warped by counteracting developments, also spiritual, in which we may trace signs that look like the dark and terrible irony of a being whose hatred to the human race is so deadly that he will if possible work man's woe through his very blessedness.'

'Everything in Christianity,' continued Philip, 'its slow advance, its repeated retrogressions, its fearful outburst of fanaticism, its frequent blank collapses of indifference, testifies to the presence of a powerful adversary. To this cause too we may attribute what we may call its cryptogamous character, its tendency to hide and withdraw from sight, its strange secret births, solitary as those of the wild deer in the thicket, "its children brought forth with none to pity them," the children of her,[1] who, flying from the face of the dragon ready to devour her child as soon as it was born, found a place in the wilderness prepared for her of God.

[1] Rev. xii.

'To this powerful hostile influence we may also trace what seems otherwise so strange, and otherwise unaccountable in the whole Divine economy; that which has been so justly called "the parsimony of grace," a parsimony running through the whole scheme of God's supernatural dealings with man, at strange variance with the lavish wealth and waste of nature. How few from age to age are called into close neighbourhood and nearness with God; how few even among these chosen to remain with Him in unbroken spiritual communion! The world's heart through countless ages has ached with very splendour; the dark untracked woods, the deep unfathomed ocean, teem with costly miracles of skill and beauty. God has time and room for everything, yet man, whom God loves, remains abject and degraded. Only from time to time does a heart touched by His highest influence awake to wonder, to adore, to see Him as He is. Yet the river of God is full of water, with Him is the residue of the Spirit. Spiritual creation must be as easy to God as is natural, yet man seems kept at a great distance from God purposely, and no doubt in mercy.'

He paused, and I said inquiringly, 'I have sometimes heard you say that the Election of God, if we knew its true import, would probably be found the secret of His mercy? I suppose when you said this your thoughts were following the same track as Herder's, when he remarks, in commenting on the life of Abraham and other chosen men of the elder Covenant—take the general body of the prophets as an example—"What has close friendship with God ever proved to man, but a costly, self-sacrificing (*aufopfernde*) service?"'

'And one,' resumed Philip, 'that seems to make him on whom it is conferred the mark for a powerful and a subtle foe. The eminent favour of God, as shown in large spiritual graces, seems to expose the recipient to such grievous outward persecutions, to such insidious attacks, such protracted secret trials, that I have long learnt to acquiesce in the hiding of God's power, and to look upon it, as I have said, as one of the deep secrets of His mercy.'

'But,' I suggested, 'this view of the Divine economy seems to imply a certain equality between

good and evil; you seem to look upon them as almost balanced powers, to an extent that tends to rob God of His attribute of omnipotence.'

'I am not prepared,' returned Philip, 'to give you any full and clear statement of my views on a subject so mysterious, and one upon which we actually *know* so little. If it is hard for man, under the present conditions of our nature, to converse with angels, difficult for him to realize the sweetness of his Maker's presence, the fulness of his Redeemer's love, the gates of the spiritual world of evil seem even far more strongly barred than are those of good. For, happily for man, there has been no dread apocalypse of Satan's kingdom; we know not its laws and limits. He has as yet proclaimed no Gospel, nor has he, as God has done, sent forth an explicit declaration to *invite* man to enter into his allegiance, and to participate in his nature. He has established no visible Church upon earth; he has no priest, no baptism, no sacrament. The deepest researches that have yet been made seem to leave it doubtful how far it is *possible* for man, under the present conditions of our nature, to enter into actual communion with spirits of an-

other order than his own. All that we know definitely on this subject is interwoven as it were with our Saviour's history, and is greatly connected both with His miracles and His parabolic teaching. From these, and from hints and inferences scattered thickly through the whole narrative of our Lord's life, I would certainly conclude that in the great struggle between good and evil there is more equality between the combatants than ordinary theology admits of. The very energy of our Saviour's conflict, His baptism, fasting, and temptation, His agony and bloody sweat, proves (when we consider how great a being Christ was) its intensity. It is not without a cause that an athlete puts forth his full strength. Neither in considering this subject do I forget Count de Maistre's significant saying. I do not remember his exact words, but they are to the effect that "we do not see the Duchy of Lucca invade France, nor Genoa declare war with England." The struggle between good and evil has been long and protracted and deadly; it has demanded on the part of God the costliest sacrifices. And when I say this, I do not allude only to the life of Christ

"once offered," but to the continual desolation which evil works; a finite intelligence, it seems to me, can conceive of no doom so dreadful as that of a wise and good Being compelled to witness, as God does, the spectacle that our earth must present to one who sees it as it is without veil, or blind, or illusion, *and who sees it all at once.* How is it possible to believe that God, if He could, would not prevent, or at once make an end of, woes and wrongs that no good man can bear to look upon, or even to think of without the half-conscious palliations by aid of which the mind

"Withdraws its ken
From half of human life"?

But why should I speak of preventing or of ending? Had God's rule been absolute and uninvaded from the beginning, "a reign of righteousness," such as we are told to expect in the Kingdom we yet look for, and for the coming of which we daily pray, discord would never have existed even in the possibility or germ.'

'To think otherwise,' I said, 'and to look at Satan as a being entirely amenable to God's will and pleasure, and exercising, under Him, a merely

permitted power, certainly tempts one to ask, with good simple-hearted Mercy, "Why then doth the Interpreter keep so ill-conditioned a cur tied up so close to his gate to frighten pilgrims?" The subject of the personality of Satan is a very obscure one, yet I have always felt that the looking upon him as a being simply existing and working by God's permission, gives a dramatic, almost scenic character not only to our blessed Lord's great conflict with the principle of evil, but also to that continual struggle against its power for ever going on throughout the world. Life, giving evil its conventionally orthodox value, is no battle-field where opposing forces strive for mastery, but the arena for a gladiator-show, less real even than were those of old, as all in this one is supposed to be planned from its beginning to its ending, fore-cast in every move, like the games in Philidor on "Chess," so arranged for the instruction of learners.'

Philip smiled—'Yet if evil were only permitted, as we are so often told, to bring out and develop good, and if what goes on around us is simply a game, and an instructive one, it would surely be planned on a less costly scale; nor would it be so

often played out to the ruin of all that is fairest in our mortal life, or to the (at least apparent) destruction of all that is hopeful in our eternal destinies. And all that we know of life seems to confirm and indorse what Scripture tells us of a widespread spiritual agency, radically hostile to man, able to influence his thoughts and actions, able even to enter within his very nature, and to work *through himself* his own ruin. Our extended acquaintance with man's structure, and improved knowledge of the relations between what in our own nature is spiritual and what is material, tends to confirm the Christian teaching on this subject by showing us that there are whole regions, as yet but partially explored, within us, in which we lie fearfully open to subtle spiritual inroads and invasions, to suggestions from which the mind itself recoils so strongly as to prove that it is not *within itself* that they arise. How few are there who have not known something of the anguish caused by thoughts, sometimes impure and sometimes dark and blasphemous, which are entirely unconnected with any track the mind is consciously following, and are out of harmony with all it aims at, delights

in, or desires. Such thoughts do not grow up within us like the self-sown, self-nourished seeds of evil to whose growth and nurture the choice and will have in some degree consented, but seem flung, as might be spears and arrows or the "fiery darts" to which Scripture compares them, with no intention but that of terrifying and wounding the mind. I have often, in connexion with this subject, considered the dread sufferings of the childish heart from susceptibility to spiritual alarms, its proneness to believe frightful stories of the supernatural, or even when such have been never heard, its strange instincts of a world of terror, which make both darkness and loneliness fearful to it. This seems to run parallel with the experience of the human race in general, and to confirm that early, deep, ineradicable tradition of evil which lies at the root of the tree of man's life; the instinct which makes the savage, yes, even the Christian peasant, throng and people every wild and solitary place with beings of a malign order, powerful and hostile to man. Paganism as a whole, whether we view it in its more complex and elaborate, or in its rudest forms, is alike a system

of deprecation, its countless rites are but the effort to propitiate, or where that is not supposed possible, to elude a host of watchful unseen foes. And the experience of all the most thoughtful missionaries of our own day, Protestant and Romish alike, working in different regions of the globe, and in fields geographically very far removed from each other, seems to agree strangely in one fact, that of finding, beneath every accepted and accredited form of heathenism, the deep-sunken foundation of an earlier and darker creed, connected with human sacrifice, with rites unspeakably foul, cruel, and debasing, such as of old were worshipped upon

> "that hill of scandal, by the grove
> Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate."[1]

'Krichna, for instance, who in the Hindu mythology is usually represented as the embodiment of youth and unrestrained enjoyment, indulgent to human weakness, holding very much the place of Dionysus among the Greeks, as the god of flourishing, exuberant, ever-changing life, and who as such is worshipped with songs, and flowers,

[1] *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

and dances, is no less one with the terrible Djakan Natha, Lord of the World, the "Juggernaut" so familiar to the missionary stories of our childhood, before whose car his votaries, wrought up through these very songs and dances to frenzy, fling themselves in the irresistible longing for self-immolation. Now that the light of the scientific and critical spirit peculiar to our day has broken in some degree into the field of missionary labour, it has become possible to compare and generalize facts, so as to arrive at some broad conclusions. Among these nothing has seemed to me so striking in Heathenism as the strange structural unity which underlies the widest apparent differences.

'A missionary of our own day, from New Zealand or the Sandwich Islands, will tell you of philtres prepared to cause madness or love, of spells, and charms, and incantations practised there, and generally by female adepts, identical with those described by Virgil and Theocritus. Through the whole of Paganism we shall find continually reappearing features, recalling the earliest tradition of our ruined family. We shall hear the murmur

of a waving tree, a rustle in the grass beneath it, and become aware of the snake that speaks, of the woman that listens. Serpent-worship,[1] so far as we can judge from the testimony of those best informed, seems at once the oldest and most widely diffused of all beliefs. Think again of the dark aberrations to which humanity is at all times subject: how it is sometimes bound and locked in bars of iron, as in gigantic long-existing tyrannies, like those of the Eastern Monarchies, or the

1 'The prevalence of serpent-worship, both in ancient and modern times, is a fact conceded on all hands, and Mr. Fergusson's late work shows that such worship has, at some time or other, *found a place in the religious system of every race of men*. It had its place in Egypt and in Palestine, even among the Hebrews; in Tyre and Babylon, in Greece and Rome; among the Celts and Scandinavians, in Persia and Arabia, in Cashmere and India, in China and Thibet, in Mexico and Peru, in Abyssinia, *and generally throughout Africa*, where it still flourishes as the state religion of Dahomey: in Java and Ceylon; among the Fijians, with whom it still prevails, and in various quarters in Oceania. Not less well established is the fact that it was a terribly real faith, with its priests and temples, its highly-organized ecclesiasticism and ritual, its offerings and sacrifices, all ordered according to a code. The code, the ideas of divine government, the god himself seem to have varied; here, the object of worship was a living serpent—in another place the image of one, in a third it became a spiritual ideal, a five-headed, seven-headed, or nine-headed snake, a creature of the religious imagination. But under all varieties, the fact is manifest of the serpent having attained *divine* honours, the character of being a good, wise, beneficent, powerful deity, to adore and propitiate whom was man's duty and privilege.

'Two points connected with this worship are very noticeable:

'First, the great antiquity of the faith; of this there can be no doubt. Compared with it all other religions are modern; they imply it at their foundations, and their earliest history is the record of its more or less

Feudalism of the Middle Ages, crushing all play of its happier energies, and rendering advance to good impossible; then hurled, and, as it were, driven to destruction by the fierce impulse to snatch some unattainable, deeply longed-for good, such as "liberty, equality, fraternity," man's simple rights, which he can never win, yet to which he knows that he was born.

'Who can help seeing in life itself, whether we take it under its political, social, domestic, or indi-

suppression or subordination. The cultus prevailed, for example, among the Hebrews before the true faith. "With the knowledge we now possess," says Mr. Fergusson, "it does not seem so difficult to understand what was meant by the curse of the serpent (in Genesis). When the writers of the Pentateuch set themselves to introduce the purer and loftier worship of Elohim, or Jehovah, it was first necessary to get rid of that earlier form of faith which the primitive inhabitants of the earth had fashioned for themselves." The curse, of course, was not on the serpent, but on the cultus; we find a similar story in Persia and in India, in both of which places this religion prevailed. "The serpent that beguiled Eve," says Max Müller, "seems hardly to invite comparison with the much grander conception of that terrible power of Vritra and Ahriman in the Veda and Avesta. In the Avesta there is a great battle between Thraêtaona and Ayhi dahâka, the destroying serpent. The greatest exploit of Indra was the slaying of the serpent Ahi."

'An eminent Romanist missionary, Père Domenech, gives a frightful account of the "Vaudoux" superstition, widely diffused among the negro slaves in South America; it is the worship of the living serpent, accompanied with dances and orgiastic rites. "The negro," says Mr. Fergusson, 'holds his old faith and his old feelings fast, in spite of the progress of the rest of the world. Christianity and Mahommedanism have swept serpent-worship out of great part of the world. Neither influence has yet penetrated to the Gold Coast, and serpent-worship, which, as far as we at present know, is the oldest of human faiths, is now practised with more completeness at Dahomey than anywhere else, at

vidual aspect, the working of something which, as I have said before, is unfriendly to life itself as regards its free expansion, not only to beauty but to happiness? who can help tracing in all human affairs the working of that hostile element, that malign agency, to which the ancient heathen writers were so alive when they spoke of "the envy or the irony of the gods"? What is the world itself, the social world, but the dim counter-

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least at the present day." "In Dahomey," says Burton, "the serpent is esteemed the supreme bliss and general good. *It is the god of wealth.* It is believed to be immortal, omniscient, and all-powerful. In its worship there are solemn processions, prayers are addressed to it on every occasion, and answered by the snakes in conversation with the high priest."

'The second striking peculiarity of this creed is that those who held it seem invariably to have believed that the serpent was their progenitor. Whole peoples, says Bryant, accounted themselves of the serpent breed, and derived their name from the serpent-god Ops. The Ethiopians, he says, derived their name from this word, so did the Europeans, Oropians, Elopians, Asopians, Inopians, and Ophionians. The original title of all of these was *Ophites*. "In Phrygia and upon the Hellespont, where the Ophites sent out colonies very early, lived a people styling themselves the serpent-breed, who were said to retain an affinity and correspondence with serpents." The old name for Rhodes was Ophiusa. In Athens and Sparta, as in Abyssinia, Peru, and among the Caribs, the first king and founder is supposed to have been a serpent, or, as Cecrops, *half a snake*, being, on the other side, of human parentage. And as a natural consequence of the serpent being believed to be the first father, he came in many places to be also looked upon as the first instructor of men. We find among the Aztecs that it was "the feathered serpent" who taught them the knowledge of laws and of agriculture, and the principles of religion; and Cecrops (who was half a serpent) introduced marriage into Greece, and taught the people laws and the arts of life.'—*Fortnightly Review*, Nov. 1, 1869.

part of its Prince, emphatically a lie, and "vanity," something which ever falls short of its promise, which lures, which counterfeits, which wounds, and which yet fastens on humanity with a deadly grasp, tightening as life advances, till our race stands up as Laocoon with the snake wrapped round him, stands between his helpless sons, vainly appealed to and appealing? All we know of man, whether by tradition, or through experience, shows him to be a being who dreads an unseen foe, who seeks an unseen friend, one who aspires far above the present conditions of his nature, and who is yet capable of being dragged down far beneath them. He has within him, confessedly limited as is his nature, somewhat of the God and of the Angel, affinities with the animal who serves him, and with the demon who afflicts him. Therefore must he expect a Saviour. It is not in his own nature, perplexed and fettered, that he can ever seek deliverance; it is too deeply wounded, too widely shattered, too closely bound. He will rather look for spiritual rescue where reason and Scripture alike place it, *from without*, in a region far above his own contracted sphere.

And while he adores his incarnate God as the great head of a restored humanity, he will consider his own moral re-creation as but a part, probably a very small one, of the work of the Cross in which he has learnt to glory, a work unseen, and vast, and spiritual, the work given by the Father to the Son to do, and of which the Son, even while He was yet upon the Cross, said that it "was finished." The work of the Cross itself finished, while so much seems scarcely begun. The Battle won, though peace and order are not yet re-established. The cause gained, for which the Son of God was manifested, "that He might destroy the works of the Devil."'

CHAPTER VII.

'Beneath the apple-tree
I espoused thee,
There I gave thee my hand,
And thou wert there redeemed
Where thy mother was corrupted.'

(*Christ speaking to the human soul.*)

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

CHAPTER VII.

AND now, from the contemplation of the Cross, our minds would often pass to the consideration of that to which it leads, the kingdom of everlasting blessedness, Christ's visible reign on earth, His taking of all things to Himself. Often would Philip recall the deep saying of Tertullian, '*All things ripen, and righteousness also*,' and would also recur to the Abbé Joachim's commentary on the course of spiritual progress—'In its cradle religion was but Nature-worship and the fear of God, the Law and the Prophets were its childhood, the Gospel its youth, the Holy Spirit will give it its maturity.' He dwelt with pleasure on an extract I showed

him from a French author, who, writing on the Renaissance, says, 'All the creations of God submit to a law of gradual development, they follow an ordered course. *The gentleness of God is His violence:* He hurries nothing; centuries are His days (the working days of God). His revelation has its history, which, like that of all living beings, develops and expands with time. It is for this that He has ordained His church, a heavenly mother-bird, charged with the task of keeping warm and hatching, one by one, at the hours appointed by His everlasting patience, all the germs of truth contained in the Gospel. We may trace this divine plan in the gradual growth and complete organization of Christian dogma. *The moral genius of Christianity has also its history.* First of all the church announced to men the doctrine of salvation through the Cross, through contempt of all that the world loves and honours. Life, according to the spirit of this teaching, is a delusion, and there is nothing true but death. But a time will come when she will unfold a fuller doctrine, and preach life instead of death, a life passed among men, a life lived with God and for

Him. The Christian's life is then no longer the life of a pilgrim, looking always to the end of his journey, caring but to pitch his tent by the side of the road he hurries on, but the household life, the life that builds and plants, and makes vineyards, a life which believes in the redemption of its terrestrial destiny.'

Philip entered warmly into the ennobling beauty of this passage, only he said we must be careful to remember that the way to this land of milk and honey lies, like the way to the olden Canaan, through warfare, conquest, and death. The Renaissance, with all the glorious elements it contained, was not able to regenerate the Humanity it sought to deify, because it would not in any way consent to die nor acknowledge that there is in all mortal things a corrupt principle needing restriction, and even excision. Therefore 'it remained alone,' and soon passed into a heartless self-worship and dilettanteism, willingly ignorant of all man's deeper woes, as cruel as the fanaticism it displaced, and under some aspects even more repulsive. So too will all modern systems pass into inanition which deny or ignore, as regards spiritual and

moral life, a truth which natural life almost forces us to accept through the strong analogies it presses on our notice; the 'necessary death' through which, as through a gate, all life needs to pass,[1] before it can enter upon a new condition of being, and failing of which it remains alone, locked up in the death of a merely seeming life, like a mummy or petrifaction. Not only the change which we call death, but probably the whole of this our mortal life, is only a slow and difficult and painful birth into a higher existence; the very breath we draw is part of the travail of creation towards a yet but partially fulfilled aim. 'Natural religion,' he would say, 'will not admit of this necessity, it does not consent to die; it

[1] *Physical life is renovation*, or a renewing of the old. A body changes its entire substance within certain periods of time, throwing off its old particles and assimilating new ones. Therefore isolation is impossible; no man can live to himself, no weed can live to itself, even for a moment, for in that moment would be death. 'Everything requires everything,' the law of life is love, marriage, union: renovation is but giving and receiving; where it ceases life ceases. When you take food you take a thing which, left to itself, would soon become stale and putrid, and you renew it through making it alive, through making it part of your living substance and a new part of that substance. Every breath we exhale, and the whole throwing off of our system, is taken up by and becomes part of some other life: so in vegetable life: in each kingdom the capital, the 'treasure' on which life is sustained, is composed of things new and old, old things becoming new and new things becoming old, to be again renewed.

So with regard to the interchange which is always going on between

speaks glorious things of the beauty of a rich, fully developed life of God in all things and all things in God; but it can only speak of them: it misses that regenerative element which Christianity under its very humblest forms supplies, the recognition of a corrupt principle within us, the communication of a fuller life from without. Therefore it kindles no fire upon earth; it brings no sword to separate man's baser instincts from his holier, no strong and searching wind to fan his upward aspirations into flame. For all of this our race must look to Christianity, made weak and found in fashion as a man, but able to work what no earthly system has even promised, the death of evil, and the life, through that death,

vegetable and animal matter—*intermediate death* always conditions the transmutation. The animal does not 'vegetate;' its substance becomes vegetable only by first ceasing to be animal, by ceasing in fact to be animated, *by dying*:—nor does the vegetable animate; it becomes animal through the cessation of its vegetation, *i.e.* its death.

So in intellectual, imaginative, and spiritual life, the measure of life's strength is its assimilating, vitalizing, renewing power. Bread to nourish me must be more than my bread,—it must become to me a living part of my living self; truth to nourish me must be more than truth known to me,—it must become part of my living spiritual self. We cannot live upon that which is dead so long as it is dead. Food and drink, unless assimilated, have given me nothing; *so must spiritual food, to yield spiritual strength, be spiritually quickened*; it must not only be possessed, it must be made alive; *it must not only be mine but me*; it must lose its separate being, its abstraction, and contribute its being to the living substance of my soul. G. W.

of good only through death to be attained to. Christ says emphatically, 'I am the resurrection and the life;' He puts the resurrection *first*, and everything in Christianity conforms to this condition—the laying down of life that it may be taken again.

'And in this seeming austerity,' he would often say, 'lies the secret of its great tenderness. There is in Christianity a strength of supernaturalism which, even in limiting its scope by depriving it of a foothold on nature, and placing it in opposition with life as it now is, opens to it a gate which nature shuts, and gives it, in the words of one of the most evangelic Prophets, "the valley of bitterness for a door of hope." Christianity knows nothing of the rude indifference, the careless prodigality with which nature works; it gathers to itself the wrecked, the ruined, the blighted; it comes forth to seek the lost, and this not because it *prefers*, as Goethe said of it, what is despised, and feeble, and contradictory, but because in its sight, as to the eyes of the Great Father of all, there *is* nothing which is despised and abject. And because it hath fellowship with the Father,

always more kind than are the brethren, it cherishes the lame and the blind, those hated of David's soul. In Christianity there is an element of tenderness and of hope, which is always, and we may say inevitably, absent in Nature, which accurately knows its own scope and limits, and leaves on one side all that it finds either injured or radically deficient, saying of it, "that which is wanting cannot be numbered." But the reserve forces of Christianity are boundless, even those of infinity itself; it knows not how to despair. How should it do so when in its own career it has itself so often passed from ignominy to glory! when its Founder's human life, beginning in a manger, was yet ushered in by the songs of Angels, and which, ending on the Cross with malefactors, deserted by man, and apparently abandoned by God, *then* reached its point of triumph!'

'In Christianity,' he would say, 'all is supernatural, nothing really unnatural, though it may often seem to run counter to Nature, and does in truth contradict it in its present working, because nature is itself limited, harsh, and contradictory. Christianity belongs to another order, and appears, as

far as we can judge, to hold forth to the world a divine ideal of excellence, corresponding to that original plan of God in creation from which *things as they now are*, whether in nature or in human society, show a manifest swerve and deflection. And in effecting its great moral aim, the recovery of the spiritual image of God in man, it has found itself so at war with what now surrounds it, that it has had both to suffer and to offer violence, and its history has but too abundantly confirmed the deep saying of Aristotle, that the failure of a higher aim causes more loss than failure in a lower one. Human selfishness itself perhaps has not worked such bitter woe on earth as has religious acrimony and misdirected zeal.'

'How often,' he said to me one day, 'do I recall the words of our Lord Himself, in parting from His disciples before He suffered: "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father." So must the Christian now rejoice, when through the very love for his dying and risen Saviour he has learnt with Lacordaire no longer to "look at Christ as being the end of His own work," but as being, as He Himself declares, "the way,"—the

way of recovery and of return to God, that righteous Father whose tender mercies are over all His works,—the Father who, in the Person of His one only beloved Son, found righteous even as He Himself is righteous, has come forward to meet and welcome back all His erring and suffering children,—the Father who in the very work of the Cross has proved that man is dearer to Him even than Himself. In the Cross, he would say, God has stooped to acquit Himself of a mighty debt; He has there justified that deep persevering love of the creature to which the whole history of our race testifies, the ardent desire and search of man after his Father and his God, of which idolatry itself is but the dim, and, as Möhler finely remarks, the often-times tragic expression. The way of the Cross, "the King's Highway," is a sorrowful one, as it was when it was trodden by the King Himself, when He walked *before* His disciples and spake to them of His decease which He must shortly accomplish at Jerusalem. The very shape and outline of the Cross is suggestive of anguish, for while it imitates the form of man, it contradicts his two strongest natural instincts, the desire for

action and the yearning for rest. There man stretches out his arms, but to meet no soft embrace, no kind reciprocating pressure; there his feet are made fast as in the stocks; the iron enters into his soul; yet there transfixed, he is there transfigured, and finds on Calvary his true Thabor.'

'The more highly,' he would often say, 'that we learn to value the entire mediatory work of Christ, the more we shall rejoice in the conviction that it is mediatory and temporary in its whole character and aim. When Christ has given back the kingdom to the Father, and God is all in all, then whatever has been harsh and restrictive in man's relations with the Divine will disappear. Then nature will reveal her beauty, and the heart unfold its wealth.'

He would recall, on these points, the splendid imagery used by the prophetic writers; their deep sympathy with natural joy, their descriptions of the music and the dancing with which the Father's house resounds when the long-lost son comes back, never to leave it again. '*Then* shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, the young and the old together.' He would draw his favourite illustra-

trations from family life, in those its more intimate relations, so close as to be often trying and restrictive, in which nature itself has implanted a thorn which Christianity has seemed but to drive deeper. He would contrast the harshness of our Saviour's words, 'Unless a man hate his father and mother, he cannot be My disciple,' the predicted 'sword,' the disuniting principle foreseen by Him in His own doctrines, destined to work such sharp division among the most intimate of our natural ties, with the tenderness of the prophetic pictures of a restored family life, when the stream and current of natural affections no longer vexed, or chafed, or tortured; nor yet, as now so often, hemmed in by the rocks of a 'narrow domesticity,'[1] shall flow on like a broad bright river, sweeping through a deepened channel, its waters purified from their very source and hidden spring. Among the many terrible signs which are to herald in our Lord's second coming, he would dwell upon one which is full of tenderness and consolation, the turning of the fathers' hearts to the children, and the hearts

[1] Renan.

of the children to their fathers, and point out the characteristic print this feature will leave upon the wide, universal mourning for sin, the blissful weeping of families, each 'apart' from the other, when our whole Humanity learns to look upon Him hom it hath pierced. He would notice the especial tenderness of God in drawing near to the soul under the image of that relation which is the most close and intimate of all,—His recognition of that innate feebleness and dependence on Him, which gives the human soul its feminine element, the change from Baal my Lord, to Ishi my man or husband,[1]—a tenderness undiminished by the deep stains the soul has contracted since it left the love of its first espousals, the yet by him unforgotten kindness of its youth. When the soul, he would say, returns to its God, the human heart will recover its true wealth, all that is harsh and blighting in outward nature will disappear, and all that is now so constraining in civil and in social life will end. Man will so love the law he lives under that the very name of Baal,

[1] See, as regards this, the Prophecies of Jeremiah, of Ezekiel, and of Hosea.

Lord or Master, will be a sound unheard. And Christ, he would say, is even now favourable to the simple and needy, and Christianity, even under its very austerity, is more tender to the instincts with which it often seems at war than is the poetry[1] which caresses and flatters them, because it alone probes man's original wound and knows the secret of his true need. Religion—and by this word he did not intend to speak of Christianity only—recognises two cravings of man's heart which nature leaves unsatisfied, and than which we shall find none deeper and more absolute—man's desire for individual recognition, and his sense of alienation from God. And therefore he would recur to what he had said before, that Heathenism was more near the Kingdom of Heaven than simple Deism, which must always

1 'Why,' asks Herder, 'is the poetry of the Psalms so comforting, but because, from its being based on the idea of the Fatherhood of God, it leads the mind in all earthly casualties to revert to His will, and thus tends to bring into the events of life something of the same order that their idea of the hand and eye of God brings into their conception of nature. Compared with this, *as regards the soul's wants*, the fairest poetry of the Greeks is but glittering and external, and the Celtic, much as I love it, is but like a glorious, cloudy, evening sky, displaying much splendour both upon earth and in heaven, *but without sun, without God, without aim, showing us no way.*'—*Spirit of Hebrew Poetry.*

leave the heart cold,—leaving, as it does, God and man exactly where it finds them, with a link missing between them which it makes no effort to fill. In Christianity he saw this link, the 'way' foretold by its great Founder, the way which the 'vulture's eye,' or whatever is most keen by nature, would never have discovered—the way of recovery and of return.

About this time he showed me, with much pleasure, a letter he had received from a friend.[1] 'As when in a protracted winter and tardy spring vegetation is delayed from day to day, till suddenly some mild May morning the vital forces of the earth rush out in blade and bough, the buds burst their sheaths, the chrysalis its shell, the earth grows warm and sunny all at once, as if a day had come for which it had waited long, so does the Church of God now wait for such a May-day among the nations, when a vast change, no longer confined to scattered individuals, to isolated, solitary hearts, but affecting whole communities (it may possibly be whole peoples), shall

[1] W. K.

be accomplished. When He who is the resurrection and the life speaks to His Church, now surely in a winter sleep, as He annually speaks to this material earth, the change *must* be organic and wide. *Who can tell how near that advent may be*, or how great will be the day of the Lord! The time may not be far distant when the hearts of Christendom and of men outside its pale shall with one accord return to their Father, and when all the latent seeds which now lie hidden in the seemingly waste fields of our humanity shall expand in beauty and in fruit. We know not how many such seeds may even now be lodged among us unseen, scattered through Christian England by the great Sower who goeth out to sow. He may have lodged them by thousands around us, in unsuspected places, carried them by the wind blowing as He listeth, and borne them by the Spirit noiselessly as the snow-flake or the winged seed into hearts unconscious of their advent. I have great joy in the thought that the great birth-hour of the nations unto Christ may not be distant now. Its arrival does not depend on a vast machinery of causes working wholly in the sphere

or plane of the natural. The great silent Sower goeth out to sow. *That* is the life of the world. Thousands of seeds deposited by Him, and a May-day of the world that may arrive at any moment! I connect all the hopes of the future with this coming of Christ *to His Church* as the resurrection of the spring comes to the sleeping earth. It is not His personal presence that is needed, *but His life incarnate in His Church*, as it was once incarnate in the flesh. Then will spring up in Christendom a deeper reverence for the Church, individual Christians will feel themselves linked vitally to Christ, by being linked to His representative not mechanically, not materially, but *dynamically*. This dynamic relationship has been sadly wanting in many eras of the Church's history. In the Roman Church it has gendered to "bondage" and death. Would that Christendom would even now awake to a sense of its organic union with its Lord through His Church, and of its responsibility to Him and to it, as "to one great whole." ' 'How much,' I said, as we commented together upon this letter, 'should we gain, by learning to look upon the Church of Christ

as no mere temporary institution, ordained by God for certain ends, but as having from everlasting to everlasting formed a part of the Divine economy, and been connected with the plan by which the Almighty made the world! We should then,' I added, 'view its present work in connexion with another great spiritual fact, from which it is too often harshly severed, that foreknowledge and election of God[1] which runs like a strong chain through every revelation of Him, whether it come to us by way of nature or of grace.' 'It is evident,' to quote again from a friend's letter, 'that God governs souls not with reference to the thirty or fifty or seventy years of our present individual life, but with reference to an illimitable age. It is obvious too that He has from time to time, through chosen families of men, and through elect individuals, offered an

[1] How persevering and irrevocable on God's part is His absolute choice and election of certain persons to a given work, is shown in what we may call His *re*-election of the Jewish nation, and His manifest design again to bless the world through them. Witness such prophecies as Zechariah, chap. ii.,—'I will yet choose Jerusalem again,' and that of Jeremiah, chap. xxii., 'I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul,' in connexion with the declaration of St. Paul, that their reconciliation shall be to the Christian Church as 'life from the dead.'

elevating future to our race, and carried forward those who accepted it as His pioneers over a wider area. To as many as have received Him He has given, through prayer, through sacrament, through the supernatural privileges of His Church communicating the Son's merits, through the Spirit's agency, "power to become the sons of God," while the rest of the world, uncalled to such lofty ends, untaxed by such high responsibilities, He still blesses with the ordinary blessings of His good providence. God works in a sphere outside of ours, by a mighty foreseen plan, of which we know nothing except by such hints and indications as the work itself furnishes. We do not even know, as Butler remarks, what in His work are ends, and what merely means subserving some further end, known only unto God.'

'And surely,' resumed Philip, 'all we see around us, and all we feel within, tends to throw us back upon that Divine plan. Reason itself calls out for faith, by showing us that there is in man himself the hint and indication of a perfection which he, without aids and helps from the Divine, can never attain to. For we are now in a position

to form a tolerably fair idea of what man can accomplish in his own sphere. He has worked already such wonders in the natural order, that his very achievements have shown him where limitation lies, and where it must ever under the present dispensation of things continue to be found. Magnificent as may be our race's future, and rich in conquest over material nature, we now see too plainly to be any longer beguiled by the hopes and dreams that thrilled generous hearts so keenly in days of mighty upheaval, such as those of the Renaissance, Reformation, and the First Revolution in France, when our whole humanity seemed ready, like some giant tropical flower, to burst through sheath and wrapping into perfect bloom. Now, we know too much of the moral weakness of man to hope on his part for any permanent and steadfast conquest in the direction of happiness and right. The few have long oppressed the many, the many, it seems probable, will now assert and win their place, and will *then* become, in the spirit of Heine's justly bitter poem, the world's Cæsar, with all the old Cæsar's faults, while the world itself will be no

nearer to its true golden age when *all* are alike happy, honoured, and recognised—the days when "one shall count for one."

'The strength of human passion, the weakness of human reason, the bondage of man to his animal nature, the iron power of outward circumstances, make any general, continual progression towards universal good and happiness impossible; therefore now, and so long as our present order continues, must "the just man live by faith," by faith, his soul's true lofty poem, which his life translates to him in broken imperfect language. Therefore must man look, not to himself, but to his God, and trust to that which God has done for him. We can, as we have agreed, judge but little of the plan by which God works; yet we can see that we have been already placed, or, as the apostles word it, "planted" by Him in a grand supernatural order. How great, how elevating is their conception of the Church as it is unfolded in such passages as 1 Cor. xii., and implied in their whole writings! We there see it as a spiritual society in loving union with Christ. It is His body, in which He lives as a human soul lives

within a human body, *and through which He gives life.*'

'I miss this great idea,' I said, 'in many books of our present day, and I especially miss it in some of those in which the strongest stress is laid upon personal devotion to Christ. This devotion, unless there is some link supplied to unite our souls to Him, is only the soul's gaze, in which it may stare itself blind. If Christ be *our life*, it must be in some closer way than through "the simple following of Him,"—words which might be used of Plato or Socrates, or any one who has left to the world a system of morals, or given it an example of life. Nor do I find much more satisfaction in hearing Christianity defined as being "the communication of a Divine life through the manifestation of a Divine life." Another person may show me or you his strength, his beauty, his riches, his learning, and we, except through some process of assimilation with that which we behold, will remain no stronger, fairer, richer, wiser, than the sight of these excellences found us. What is fairer than a rose? What is more strong than a lion? Yet who will grow more fair or strong from

simply gazing upon either? Even Christ can only, as it were, give Himself to us through supplying that organic link, and entering into that structural union, which makes His life one with that of the Church. *In* it, *by* it, *through* it, and that which every single separate joint and limb supplieth, He still lives and still communicates life, and the saying of the Church's great Reformer is still abundantly justified, that "there is much religion in the prepositions." Christ's whole work is one of infinite condescension to our weakness; it is founded upon mediation and substitution; it is carried forward by intercession, reparation, and the giving up of life for life; and however widely those who love Christ, and live for Him, may differ, they meet upon this ground, —the trust in an imputed righteousness, the communication of a supernatural life.'

'The Catholic and the Protestant,' resumed Philip, 'alike say, "The life that I now live upon earth, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And "faith and grace" are equally, to both Catholic and Protestant, the watchwords,—faith, through which the human

spirit rouses its strength to take hold on God,—grace, through which God Himself is given to His creature. These words, and the great spiritual ideas which underlie them, are still the Church's spells in which all power lies; and they remain so, however often muttered as a drowsy charm, or deadened by ignorant and careless repetition. In them is life, and the life is the light of men. About Christ's work and office there seems little present difference of opinion among any of those who acknowledge Him to be Divine; and whatever difference still remains, seems, as Döllinger has remarked, to grow less and less with an advancing theology, so that it seems probable that all who believe in Him will soon rally under one flag. Prevailing divergences of opinion are more concerned with the modes and channels through which His divine work is communicated to man; and in the question of the Church, its true scope, its character, its necessary limitations, its needed expansion, the world's future seems to lie involved. Wrapped round, as was once a Divine child, in bands and swaddling-clothes, weak, with a woman tending it, and the dumb animal near, but stronger

even in its weakness than is the world where it is a stranger, than is the flesh to which it is an enemy, than the devil, of which it is the predestined conqueror, through the indwelling might of Him, "the seed of the woman, who shall crush the serpent's head."'

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